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WORDS

OF

RECONCILIATION.

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE,

DEVOTED TO

THE INTERESTS OF THE ONE CHURCH OF THE ONE LORD.

L. C. BAKER, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER,
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WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. V.] JANUARY, 1889. [NO. 1.

GREETING.

We send out with this number a Christian greeting to all our readers, and especially to those subscribers and friends who have shown by word and deed their sympathy with the object of this magazine. We invoke God's blessing upon them all through the coming year. It gives us joy to know that, even though the number be small, it is a growing one, who have come to believe in the gospel of the resurrection. Let such be assured that the little one shall become a thousand. The doctrine we are teaching is to be the theology of the future. Too long has the face of our Father God been obscured and masked from the world by a theology that shut out the great mass of His creatures from His purpose of love in the redemption of mankind, except perhaps that portion of them whom in pity He killed off in infancy or shut up from responsibility in idiocy. The spirit of God in the Church is tearing off this dark veil everywhere, and His children of every name are beginning to see that He sent His Son to be the Saviour of the *world*. All are to be saved from the death—race-penalty which has passed upon all men. This does not imply that any man shall attain eternal life except as he has moral fitness for it, or that men may not, after recovery to another

life, fall into the second death; but it does secure to all an opportunity to know God in Christ, and so to be forever blessed.

This "hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust" is an essential part of the *gospel*, without which it cannot be glad tidings of great joy to all people. It has been our mission, amid discouragement and reproach, to hold forth this "word of life." And we are sure that we who have had fellowship in this seed-sowing shall rejoice together in a harvest of blessing to the church and of honor to the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the day when His true glory as the Saviour of mankind is revealed.

In our zeal for this gospel of the resurrection, let not our friends think that we have forgotten the main purpose of this magazine—to aid in the work of reconciling the incomplete and jarring forms of faith which have brought confusion and weakness into the one church of the one Lord. We are increasingly convinced that these arise mainly from that incomplete view of His work of redemption which strips His resurrection of its true efficacy and glory. Until men can agree as to the nature and scope of this prime verity of the faith, there is no prospect of a united church. We must know the goal toward which all the lines in God's plan of grace converge, or we shall continue to walk in diverse and bewildering paths. We are sure that we are laboring most effectively for this object for which we toil and pray—the union in one fold of all who are in Christ—by this continual striking at the radical cause of disunion, which is the failure of the church to grasp the true purpose of God in redeeming mankind from

death through the gift of Christ who died and rose again, and so to understand her own relation to this plan as the chosen first fruits in the great life-harvest, and her priestly place in the fulfilment of God's great purpose to redeem from death all the families of the earth.

To all then who have fellowship with us in proclaiming this gospel of the resurrection of the dead, we send out a word of cheer and of hope. Let us not be discouraged by the day of small things. It is a little flock to whom it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom.

PROGRESS.

The publisher of a magazine like this has one advantage over the writer of books. Larger room is left to him for growth in the knowledge of the truth and freer opportunity in the expression of it. This is one satisfaction we have in continuing this publication. Since it began we are conscious of having come to a clearer apprehension of the truth upon the points to which we have given special attention, and at some points to have made advances. We have high authority for the statement that all our knowledge of the truth is yet, but partial. "For now we know in part and prophesy in part." "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." (1 Cor. viii, 2; xiii, 9). St. Paul seems in these passages to disclaim for himself final and absolute knowledge of the things upon which he prophesied. We may well therefore hold ourselves open to that fuller light and instruction which are promised to those who humbly seek it.

Some of the points upon which our readers may have

noticed progress in these pages, and upon which we hope for increasing light, are,

1. In a larger view of the prophecies concerning Christ's second coming.

There is one point in the Millenarian theory which is good and true and which gives it its strength; and that is the well marked line which it draws between this age or world, and the age to come, and in insisting that that age must be introduced through the open manifestation of the Christ as King and Judge of men. Its mistake has been in viewing this appearing of Christ as an *ex abrupto* entrance upon a kingly office out of which He had been before kept; whereas Scripture views it as an open and signal manifestation of a sovereignty which began when God raised Him from the dead. The coming kingdom will not be so much a new kingdom, as the disclosure of a kingdom which already exists. So it is represented in the beautiful passage Is. xxv, 7–9.

"And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all peoples a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all peoples, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces. And it shall be said in that day; Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

In this passage the kingdom is viewed as lying just behind the veil. The clouds are brushed away and the Lord is at hand. So the New Testament uses the words "appearing," "revelation," "apocalypse," to describe the

character of this manifestation. It will be the disclosure of a dominion already in exercise, but to which men were blind. From this point of view we are able to reconcile all that Scripture teaches about the Lord's coming—as both a present fact, and a future reality. We are able to connect great providential events—such as the destruction of Jerusalem—with His parousia or presence. An absent and coming Christ does not take the place in our minds of a present Christ. And our eyes are opened to the tokens of His presence in us and in the world's affairs about us, instead of being on the alert for signs and portents in the heavens. We believe that in this principle of "manifestation" lies the true reconciliation between the two theories of the second coming, and the safeguard against the wild surmises and vaticinations which have brought the hope of the Lord's coming into disrepute.

2. But this view of the kingdom as already in progress and awaiting disclosure requires the belief also that the judgment of the world is not merely a crisis of the future, but is now going on. This also has its periods of special manifestation. Jesus warned His disciples that their own generation would witness one such. There will doubtless be a supreme manifestation of His work of judgment at the end of this age. But if the scales were taken from our eyes, we should see in all the events of human history and of each individual life this King and Judge of men, winnowing the chaff from the wheat, gathering the wheat into His garner, and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. He is even now sorting men into sheep and goats and bestowing on some eternal life and inheritance in His kingdom, and consigning others to the eternal fire.

3. Resurrection must come under this same principle of progressive manifestation. If Christ is now ruling and judging the world, He must be also raising the dead, although all goes on behind the veil which is yet to be rent. This view removes all obscurity and confusion of thought about an intermediate state. Scripture always connects the life to come with resurrection. If the case of Dives be pointed to as an exception, we reply that a man cannot be looked upon as fully dead so long as the soul survives. The soul of the righteous man does not die, but is saved alive through the crisis of bodily death. The soul of the wicked man may be destroyed in hell beyond the death of the body (Matt. x. 28). In the parable of the rich man we see a soul in the process of destruction. But beyond this dissolution there is provided a resurrection. And all that can be properly regarded as life beyond the grave connects itself with this "hope and resurrection of the dead." There are intimations in Scripture that many captive dead were set free when Christ arose. They graced His triumph. St. Paul writes (2d Cor. v.) as if he did not expect to remain but, as it were, a moment in the bonds of death. "*Henceforth,*" he writes to Timothy, "there is laid up for me a crown." The word "henceforth" (the same that is used in Heb. x. 13) excludes long waiting. The early Church believed that her martyrs passed at once into life and blessedness. It is more reasonable and Scriptural to regard them as risen from the dead, than to suppose that such fullness of life is possible in a disembodied state. This so-called intermediate state must be either one of life or of death. If those in this condition are dead then they cannot have entered into life. If they are alive then they

must have been raised out of death. Putting all the evidence together, and remembering how uniformly Scripture connects the future life with resurrection (See 1 Cor. xv. 16–19, 21, 22; 2 Cor. v. 1–4; 1 Thes. iv. 14), we are compelled to believe either that all the dead are still asleep, awaiting resurrection, or that certain orders and ranks, at least, have been set free. And surely it accords with all that is revealed concerning our Lord's triumph over death, and with specific passages, to believe that this First-born One from the dead is already surrounded by many brethren, and that many "spirits in prison" who have served out their time of bondage have been released through their royal and priestly ministry.

4. This also implies that saints are already reigning with Christ behind the clouds which yet conceal Him. If this be so, they must have far more to do with the present progress of mankind in the ways of righteousness and peace than we have yet imagined. It would be folly to deny that the world is making progress, not only in the use of the creature, but in all that relates to humane and righteous dealing. There is a growing public sentiment in this direction to which both nations and individuals are obliged to conform. How much of this education of the race may be due to the unseen agency of those who have fought this battle of life through to victory and are now wearing its crown! And how much of the ministry of loving care and discipline which surrounds us in this life may be due to those who have had fellowship here with Christ in His suffering and self-denial, and who now have part in administering His protection and bounty to their kindred and fellows who are passing through these earthly scenes and

experiences. If this seems to any one fanciful and without warrant of Scripture, all we can reply is that it grows directly out of the fact, if it be a fact, that a part, at least, of the many sons for whom the Captain of our Salvation suffered, have already been made alive from the dead and entered into His glory. As kings and priests unto God, they cannot be idle spectators of this great drama of human affairs, of which their Lord is the centre; nor unconcerned for the welfare of their human brethren and kindred who are yet wrestlers on this arena.

This view of the kingdom of Christ as a present fact, and as the chief factor in human affairs, must lead us to interpret the symbolic language of Scripture which describes its approach as but the external drapery in which God has chosen to set before us the great facts which were to ensue upon the exaltation of His Son. Hence, while Jesus speaks of great commotions among the nations, and portents in the heavens and on the earth, as crowding together to herald His coming, He also assumes that the disciples to whom He spake would witness these things (Matt. xxiv. 33), and emphasizes the warning that they were to expect them in their own generation. So also St. Paul, in describing the descent of the Lord from heaven with trumpet shout to raise His sleeping saints, assumes that some of those to whom he wrote would be living when it occurred (1 Thes. iv.). The Apocalypse unfolds its visions before us with this repeated warning: "Behold, I come quickly." This uniform representation of the great events connected with Christ's coming as being close at hand compels us to reject that view of it which places it wholly in the future, and to regard it as having proceeded by successive stages

along the centuries. In a true and important sense, Christ has been manifesting Himself in each generation, as the human conditions were such as to prepare His way. And this, as we have seen, presupposes that He has also been judging the living and the dead, and that death and hades have at least begun to give up their captives.

And this suggests another point where we have made a distinct and an impregnable advance; and that is in perceiving a plain distinction between the "saints in Christ" and "the just." The former are an elect class, called of God into fellowship with His Son, and made to partake even now in His risen and triumphant life. The other class are the men who, under every form of religion, have lived in the fear of God and in kind and just relations with their fellow men, and yet who were ignorant or blind to the knowledge of God as revealed in Him. For such there is provided a resurrection of life (John v. 29.) They "go away unto life eternal" (Matt. xxv. 46.) That is, they are raised on to that plane of life along which they pass into life eternal. We have not space to repeat here the considerations which confirm this view, given in recent numbers. But nothing contributes more to a clear understanding and reconciliation of the various Scriptures which speak of human destiny, and of the relation which God sustains to all His creatures, than this view of the Church as an elect body in His great plan for the redemption of the human race from death, and that, under their priestly rule, all men are to be set free, each in his own order, and that for all right living and unselfish kindness toward others there is provided a recompense at the resurrection of the just, as all evil character must also be kept

under restraint and correction by a resurrection of judgment.

There are many other points at which we seek to hold ourselves open to increasing light. Whatever may be still unproved in the doctrine of evolution, we must not blind ourselves to the fact that light is to be expected from it upon the ways of God in creation, and even in redemption. Possibilities of new truth, and of new conquests over the forces that now shut us in in this material system, are being suggested, not only by science, but from that region where mind and matter meet, and which many are exploring under the name of "Christian Science." We know not what strange things God may be preparing to reveal to men in these last days. We only know that all treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ, to be hereafter revealed with Him. Our place is cautiously and reverently to watch along all paths these signs of His appearing. And this interest in all unfolding truth must base itself upon the conviction that all true discovery is so much gain in the knowledge of God, and that by such increase the Church is to be brought out of her present state of confusion and weakness into that unity of faith and of knowledge which shall make her a fit vehicle for the presence and glory of the Lord, with which the earth is yet to be filled.

NO DIFFERENCE.

Our readers should bear in mind that the principle of redemptive resurrection applies equally well, whatever theory is held as to the time and nature of the resurrection. Some Christians think that none of the dead have yet been

raised—not even apostles and martyrs. And inasmuch as Scripture connects the hope of a future life with the hope of resurrection, they naturally hold that all the dead remain unconscious until they are raised. Others believe that resurrection takes place after a longer or shorter interval. And very many believe in a prolonged intermediate state. For ourselves we cannot escape the conviction that life beyond the grave is revived with resurrection and is dependent upon it. This does not exclude the thought that the unsaved soul may survive for a period the death of the body, before it also is destroyed in hell. But St. Paul's declaration that if the dead rise not, then they which have fallen asleep in Christ have perished, is of itself sufficient to establish the connection between the life to come and resurrection. We are far, however, from believing that the saints of all ages are yet sleeping in death. Scripture plainly teaches that the believer becomes at once a partaker in Christ's risen life. How then can he remain for centuries under the power of death! Is it likely that His victory over death remains so long void of its fruits?

The appearance of "many bodies of the saints" after His resurrection (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53) furnishes at least one instance in proof that the deliverance of the dead through His triumph is not wholly an event of the future. And if there be one such instance, why may not a multitude of captives (Eph. iv. 8) have been delivered since His ascension to glory? A friend once remarked to us that if this be so, David could not have been one of them, because St. Peter declares at Pentecost that "he is not ascended into the heavens." The Greek verb, however, is in the past tense; hence the New Version reads, "For

David ascended not into the heavens." The passage therefore does not decide that David was then still sleeping among the dead.

Nor does the passage in 2d Timothy ii, 18 contradict this view. We there read of a certain Hymenæus and Philetus "who concerning the truth have erred, saying that resurrection (the revised Greek text is without the article), is past already." The best critics agree that the reference here is to that germinal Gnostic heresy to which the apostle also refers in I Cor. xv, where he asks "How say among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?" The later Gnosticism denied the resurrection of the body, and asserted that men find in this life their resurrection in the rising of the soul from the death of ignorance to the light of knowledge. The germs of this denial existed already in the church. The heresy of Hymenæus and Philetus, therefore, seems to have been of this sort which robbed the Christian faith of its grand hope of the resurrection of the dead. This is the very reverse of our teaching, which magnifies this hope.

See Conybeare and Howson's comment on this passage in *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Vol. II, p. 478, and the note from Tertullian quoted in Vol. I, p. 451.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM.—It is evident also that if it be conceded that the resurrection of the dead be now going on under the administration of the ascended Christ, we must view His kingdom as already begun, although awaiting its time of *manifestation*. We must regard also His judgment of the world, and of individual lives, as now in progress,

according to His word that it should begin to come to pass before that generation passed away. This does not exclude the idea of a future supreme crisis of judgment. But it leads us to connect things present and things to come as parts of one administration which began with Christ's victory over death. It suggests also that risen saints are now sharers with Him in this administration. We are coming more firmly to the conviction that some earnest Christians need less to be straining their eyes to catch the vision of the coming Christ, and need rather an opening of their eyes to see the mountains round about us filled with the encamping hosts of a present reigning Christ. It is true that we are exhorted earnestly to look forward to the day when this glory shall be revealed. But we must learn to view that day as a true *apocalypse*—an unveiling of a splendor that already exists, rather than an assumption of an office from which the Christ has been hitherto excluded. We read in Isaiah twenty-fifth, that in this mountain, that is the established Kingdom of the Messiah, shall the Lord of hosts destroy the face of the covering which is cast over all people; and it shall be said in that day, Lo! this is our God. We have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation. Here we have precisely this idea—not the bursting upon the world of a new sovereignty, but the revelation of one that already exists, although administered from behind the clouds. And this suggests why Christians are exhorted to hasten that day. They are the chosen seed through whom the glory of this kingdom is to shine forth. They are therefore to prepare their hearts for it—to see that they become fit vessels for it. That new era will be ushered in by new and striking proofs that we "are the

temple of God." And hence the supreme duty of the Church in her corporate character to seek after that unity of the spirit in the bond of peace which shall manifest to the world that she is one with Christ, and that her members constitute one organic body in Him. Whether this be done by a process of sifting, or by a mighty baptism from above that shall lift her warring factions and worldly adherents on to the high level of a true spiritual union, it must yet be done before the world will believe. May God hasten the day!

THE OUTCASTS.

In one of the most beautiful of the Psalms—the 147th—we read, among other restoring and healing blessings which Jehovah has in store for His people, that "He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel." Ordinarily this is regarded as a prediction of a future gathering and conversion of some distant generation of Jews in the latter days—a mere moiety of the whole house of Israel. How much more pregnant of meaning, and how much more touching and beautiful the promise, when we learn to regard the "outcasts" as the captive dead of His people—the multitudes who for their sins were sent down into captivity to death and hell! These are the "perished ones" for whom His great trumpet of deliverance is to be blown (Is. xxvii. 13). Nothing short of this will fulfil these beautiful words, "The Lord doth build up Jerusalem: He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel: He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." And this gives an explanation for the thought in the next stanza: "He

telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names." Twice in Genesis, when God was binding Himself in solemn oath to Abraham to make him and his seed a blessing to all the families of the earth, He appealed to the unnumbered stars of heaven in proof of His power to fulfil His promise, and also as illustrating the multitudes who were to be included in its blessing. Surely the few outcasts of some future Jewish race cannot meet the terms of this promise. How slow we are to take in the large measures of the grace of our God! The starry hosts—countless to us—are all known and numbered by Him. And the numberless dead—lost to us—are all named and enrolled by Him. His vast universe is big enough to hold them all. And all these outcasts He gathereth together. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order: "They that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done ill unto the resurrection of judgment." But it is better to be gathered even under judgment, and only within the outer circles of His great Kingdom of life, than to remain an outcast in the land of death.

THE PROPHECY OF CAIAPHAS.—From this point of view we discover also a new meaning in the unconscious prophecy of Caiaphas, uttered before the council convened to consider the effect upon the people of the miracle of Jesus in raising Lazarus from the dead. "Being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that

were scattered abroad." (Jno. xi. 52.) There seems to be a reference here to Isaiah xlix., in which it is foretold that the Messiah would not only raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel, but be the salvation of God to the ends of the earth, bringing the prisoners out of darkness into a place where they should hunger and thirst no more (vs. 8–10), and delivering His captive people from the mighty and terrible one (vs. 24,25). We have frequently shown that no explanation of this class of passages is half so satisfactory as that which makes deliverance from captivity to death the ultimate blessing promised. And thus we are able to include among the children of God who are scattered abroad, who were to be gathered together through the death of one man dying for the people, the outcasts in the land of death whom it was His mission to set free.

BUT A SINGLE TEXT.

It is safe to say that the current doctrine of everlasting punishment rests upon but one single text,—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv, 46). The other texts relied upon admit of another explanation. We have shown how easily they adapt themselves to the view that the destruction of which they speak is of this present gift of embodied life, and lies this side of resurrection. But this text, we are told, is too plain and unequivocal to yield to any such treatment. "There it stands—Jesus Himself said it—the punishment is everlasting."

At the recent Manchester Church Congress, the Rev. Sir

G. Cox suggested a method to get rid of the force of this passage. His principle of exegesis seems to be this: Any single reported saying of Christ which does not harmonize with the general character of His life and teaching must be stricken out as spurious. This would be an easy way indeed to dispose of a hard passage. We cannot endorse it: and yet in how many minds has the question arisen, "How can it be that the merciful Son of Man, who taught men that, in order to be perfect as their Heavenly Father is perfect, they must be kind to the evil and unthankful, forgive their enemies as they hope to be forgiven, and whose dying prayer for His murderers was "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," could from His throne of judgment consign countless multitudes to endless suffering in an eternal fire? This principle is akin to that given in a recent lecture by the late Rev. Dr. A. A. Hodge, who says, "It is never safe to rest a great doctrine upon a single passage." Such a doctrine must find its warrant in that it is more or less directly implied in the whole document.

It is evident, however, that there is danger in the Rev. Sir Cox's principle, as it yields too much authority to our human judgment to decide what Christ should have said.

This thing, however, may be said with regard to the claim put forth for this passage. There is too much evidence that the eschatological teaching of Jesus was tampered with by early transcribers of the sacred text, and in the interest of that priestly domination over the souls of men which the church afterwards acquired. We gave in our last number evidence sufficient to raise at least a sus-

picion that the word "punishment" was substituted for the word "fire." The two earliest Italic versions gave *ignem* where the Vulgate reads *supplicium.* If the word were "eternal fire," as in the 41st verse, then the text accommodates itself easily to our view that the sentence is of living men, (not once dead and risen), to a destruction which *precedes* their resurrection. The circumstance that the fire is called eternal would not prove the endless preservation of the sufferers in the fire, any more than the mention of unquenchable fire as that by which the Messiah would burn up the chaff proves that the chaff would be kept burning forever. Other instances of tampering, however, are less doubtful than is this. On the authority of the late revision we must reject the word "judgment" from Mark iii: 29 and read "sin." Some later copyists inserted *kolasin,* so as to make it read "shall be in danger of eternal punishment." In Mark ix : 43–49 we have the words "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" inserted three times where the revisers tell us they belong but once. Again, Mark xvi: 16, "He that believeth not shall be damned," occurs in that closing part of the gospel which is not found in the two oldest Greek manuscripts, and which was probably added by a later hand. Add to these inaccuracies in the text the fact that our English translators made "judgment" in this class of passages the equivalent of "damnation," and we have good reason for suspecting that the current doctrine has had a human bolstering beyond what was warranted by the original text. At all events, since we find that all the Old Testament promises look forward to a redemption of the race from death through a resurrection, we shall be doing violence to

the first principles of correct interpretation, if we allow a single passage like this to set aside this great redemption hope, and to convert this rescue of the dead, to all but the elect, into the unspeakable disaster of their introduction to an endless despair.

THEOLOGICAL BURDENS.

The heavy burdens which the current doctrine of man's future is obliged to carry are thus felicitously stated by the Rev. Wm. Barrows in the September No. of the *Andover Review*:

It seems to be a frigid and heartless proceeding to go to the blackboard with this problem of salvation, yet perhaps not more so than to consign the vastly major part of the human family to an endless woe by a declarative logic, and one rhetorical and theological sentence in a summary of Christian doctrine.

According to the doctrinal basis of a portion of the Evangelical Church, three-fourth's of the world's population is failing of the great salvation through a want of the personal knowledge of Christ and of an opportunity to accept His plan of redemption. These three-fourths constitute a living generation of ten hundred and fifty millions, of whom thirty-six millions a year pass over into that momentous hereafter. * * * But this estimate is based on the present extent of Christianity as obtained in the nineteenth century. As we trace the ages back, the Christian area of the world diminishes, till we come to Antioch, where a few first took the Christian name. During these nineteen ages the great human host has been without the knowledge of Christ, and without the opportunity of filling the conditions of salvation which are asserted. Except a scattering few, the human family has been called a lost race. And this has been asserted, not

in phrase and metaphor, but in plain, awful fact, as when it is said that a wrecked ship's crew have gone to the bottom. Back of the advent of Christ we add forty centuries of life and death for the redeemed race, and at the same time very narrowly contract the area through which a knowledge of this plan of redemption is made known with any practical definiteness. * * * But the great prehistoric races of the old world must be included in this range of thought, and America, before the days of Ericsson and Columbus, must be heard from. The dead and buried world must be heard, which dragged in slow length along, like the days of creation, the Stone Age, and the Bronze Age and the Iron Age of the human family. Moreover, the discoveries and demonstrations of natural science are straining the bands of the Adamic chronology to insert decades of thousands of years, where scholars in Biblical studies have given simply thousands. There is a combination of facts tending to show that the real human race is vastly older than the commonly received historic human race. This extension of its area to populations not conceived of by those who received the last command of our Lord to preach the Gospel in all the world, and this elongation of the human era far back of its commonly received beginning, add immensely to the scope and mightiness of this popular question of eschatology. If in this wide scope over all the continents and centuries, historic and pre-historic, we go abroad and rigidly demand evidence of regeneration and of an intelligent and personal acceptance of Christ as a Saviour, in order to salvation on the theory of the Synod of Dort and of the Westminster Assembly, we add very grave elements to the magnitude and anxieties of this question.

Moreover, as three-fourths of the human race are now non-Christian, the natural gain on the pagan side is as three to one on the Christian side. The number of the heathen by birth each year is immensely in excess of the conversions to Christ among them through Christian missions.

The proportion of the lost to the saved in the human race, under a system of redemption, and according to the traditional creed, has raised this question of human destiny under the Gospel to a very profound interest. It is not so much the Church which has raised the question, as that the question has siezed the Church.

These are indeed heavy burdens under which the Church has been staggering, until the demand for relief in the way of a more reasonable and Scriptural eschatology is irresistible. Would that she could see that relief at hand in the principle of redemptive resurrection! All these difficulties vanish in the light of it. The Bible becomes a new book, and the claim of the Gospel to be glad tidings of great joy is made good.

WHAT IS HELL?

The Philadelphia papers gave a report of a recent trial before one of our Judges in which a lawyer who had been confined in an asylum for the insane brought suit for his liberty and ably conducted his own case. We refer to the matter simply because we were struck by his description of what he had suffered in confinement. He was in the habit of placing at the top of his letters to friends with whom he was allowed to correspond, "In Hell."

We have often set before our readers this idea of hell as a subjective experience. But it is also an objective fact. This unfortunate man found hell in his surroundings; but he carried hell also in his own breast. Where there is perfect peace of mind and repose on God, the soul can escape hell and find heaven in the midst of the most dire circumstances. But the conception is a true one. All sin

is lawlessness (1 John iii. 5, R. V.), and lawlessness, or anarchy in human nature, is hell.

We have defined hell, or the hades of Scripture, to be that prison house of death into which sin casts its victims, where they remain bound until their resurrection. This is the objective side of it. Hell is a place. But it is also a state. The forces of evil which work in man this destruction are active now. They bring him into present torment and chains. They fetter him in bondage to evil passions or imperious ambitions. They lash him with scorpions. Men in this life may be thus truly shut up in walls which they cannot overleap and subjected to taskmasters whose yoke they cannot throw off. These walls and these torments are hell. The man is in process of destruction by a worm that dieth not and a fire that cannot be quenched. And unless he be pulled out of the fire, the destruction must go on until the body is dissolved in death and the soul, like that of the rich man, goes into torment whose issue must be also its destruction. For, as Jesus assures us, God is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

We must not, however, regard this penalty as wholly a thing of the future, or disconnect it from the operation of laws in man's being which are active all around us and in us. Men may be cast into hell this side the grave. The anarchy of sin breeds hell even here. And the warning comes to us now as of a present danger, that it is better for us to cut off an offending member than to have the whole body cast into quenchless fire. We firmly believe that in these words Jesus did not mean to bring to view a future lake of material fire, much less one that should follow a post-resurrection judgment day several thousand years dis-

tant. He was speaking of a present danger—of a subjective condition into which men might pass now through unmortified sin, and the end of which they would find to be destruction. Men all around us are in hells from which they need immediate rescue. We have been in such ourselves. And indeed it is disciples especially who were warned by these words. Some of us must needs be saved "so as by fire." Some of those around us, even of our fellow Christians, need to be pulled out of the fire (Jude 23). Hell is a pit down into which the merely natural man is being dragged by uniform, irresistible laws; yea, he is already there; for, if Scripture affirms that the sinner abideth in death, it most also be true that he abides in hell. For death and hell are twin partners in man's captivity.

But, thanks be to God, we have a Mighty Deliverer in one who is anointed to preach deliverance to the captives and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound. And as He was sent from the Father, so now He sends us. We need not wait for opportunities to preach to "spirits in prison" beyond the grave, although a great work doubtless awaits there the church of the first born; but we may find hell's captives all about us upon whom the wrath of God now abides, and who need present salvation from it, as well as from the wrath to come. All such Jesus Christ is able to save, even unto the uttermost.

We thank God for that word "uttermost." It shows that His ability passes all limits of space or time, and proves the falsity of the idea which has so long held possession of the church, that death fixes a limit and puts a stop to any exercise of His redeeming grace beyond it.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

The Independent, of Nov. 22, contains a review of the correspondence between Dorner and Martensen, by Prof. Chas. A Briggs, which betrays more sympathy with the New Theology which Dorner did so much to shape than we should expect to find in a Presbyterian theological professor. He says:

"Jesus taught that the only unpardonable sin was the sin against the Holy Ghost. Dorner and Martensen agree with most of the great Continental theologians of the century that this statement of Jesus is not confined to this life, but embraces also the middle states. They recognized, therefore, the possibility of repentance and redemption in the middle states to all whose ability in repentance had not been destroyed by personal sin against the Holy Spirit. The Gospel offer of a Saviour must be made and definitely rejected before eternal damnation is earned. There is progress in sin as well as in holiness in the middle state. It should be observed again that this view does not spring from the Arminian doctrine of Probation, but from the ethical views of Dorner and Martensen and their conception of the ethical development of man on the one side in sin until the unpardonable sin is committed; on the other in holiness until the likeness of Christ is attained, a development which in neither case can be limited by death.

These letters are full of suggestive thoughts and quickening sentences in the entire range of Christian religion, doctrine, morals and life. We shall conclude with an item that will interest every American. Dorner wrote to Martensen in 1870, just before starting to New York to the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance, that he believed in a hundred years America would have a theology of its own that would perhaps be in advance of that of Europe. This idea of Dorner will be realized if the young men of America learn to value such theologians as Dorner and Martensen who are truly conservative and catholic, and yet irenic and mediating, and who do not fear to be speculative and progressive.

We find no evidence in Scripture for Dorner's "middle state," but we do find abundant evidence of a "hope of the dead" through and after resurrection.

What we fail to see, however, is why a church which allows

one of its authorized teachers to thus speak of Dorner, and to recommend him as an example to the young men of America, could not give tolerance to our doctrine of the future, which, to say the least, is less harmful, and which is no speculation, but drawn out of the very marrow of Scripture.

PROF. ELY, of John Hopkins University, has been reading lately a paper before an association of Baptist ministers, urging "that ministers should give greater attention to material and social conditions, to the wrongs suffered by the poor, to their lack of the means of advancement, and generally to the practical affairs of this life, and less to the prospects of a life to come."

It is a marked feature of church activity in our day that far more attention is being paid to the improvement of the material conditions of their fellow men than formerly. But the hint that this can be properly done only by giving less attention to the prospects of a life to come, is wholly misleading. If the church has failed here, it is because she has misunderstood the relation between this life and the life to come. She has held a theory that there was very little relation between the good deeds done and the good character formed in this life, and the future welfare of a man, unless he became a regenerate saint. She has not understood the distinction between the recompense of such a life at "the resurrection of the just" and the crown of life henceforth awaiting the Christian. She has therefore been handicapped in her humanitarian efforts by this secret conviction that all such efforts carry over with them no abiding results into the life to come, but that the life not rooted and grounded in Christ must go out in darkness, with no recompense and no recovery. If she would only open her eyes to the true character of the Gospel provision of another life for men beyond the grave, she would make a much more proper adjustment of this matter. She would perceive how God's resurrection harvest must gather in all the good that may be wrought into any life, and that no gain toward righteousness and symmetry is ever

lost; and so the imputation of Prof. Ely that the best interests of both cannot be properly looked after at the same time, would be seen to be utterly groundless.

THERE is one irrefutable proof that the apostles did not believe that all the men of their day who had not heard of or believed in Christ would be eternally lost. They looked for and desired the return of Christ in their own day, which, on that view, would bring in the day of judgment and end all hope. How could they desire to have the door of hope thus speedily closed against all the world? No; they believed that that great event would open more widely a door of hope out of even the valley of death.

TESTIMONY OF AN EXPERT.—Mr. William Tallack, secretary of the Howard Association, London, has recently published a work of much practical value, entitled "Penological and Preventive Principles," in which many questions relating to the dimunition of crime, pauperism and intemperance, are discussed at length, and with great ability. When dealing with the human administration of justice, Mr. Tallack embraces the opportunity to refer to Divine principles bearing upon the punishment of sin.

We copy from *The Messenger* the following extracts from his book:—

"Perhaps one of the chief and most widely prevalent obstacles to the extension of a world-wide, willing reverence to the Divine government has been furnished by the promulgation of extreme and unscriptural dogmas in relation to a presumed '*endless torment*' of the wicked, as distinguished from a fair and reasonable interpretation of the whole scope and spirit of the New Testament. . . . Only the worst human miscreants would, if it were possible, deliberately roast alive, for a few hours, an offending dog, cat, or even a tiger. How, then, is it credible, that the God and Father of infinite justice and love will torture any of His poor family, to say nothing of the great majority of them, in agonizing flames of fire, for ever and ever?

"This awful dogma has generally and increasingly failed as a

popular deterrent and restraint from evil. It has even suggested an object for the most common and contemptuous forms of swearing and scoffing amongst the worst classes of mankind. It has revolted the hearts and consciences of the best men and women; and, as authoritatively promulgated by some churches, it has driven multitudes of the most earnest and thoughtful persons into infidelity.

"But, in particular, it has produced most mischievous and demoralizing influences, by leading to reactionary views in the opposite extreme. . . . Hence, for example, the ultra-Calvinism of New England has promoted, in the same region, a pernicious activity of an extreme and one-sided 'Universalism,' which ignores both the inviolability of God's law, and its indispensable vindication, through the incarnation and self-sacrifice of the Highest in Christ, as His own condescending manifestation in this world of humanity. This system of moral negation encourages vicious laxity and irreverence. . . . .

"Augustine, of Hippo, who is so specially responsible for the general and authoritative diffusion of the dogma of 'eternal torment,' exemplified in his own conduct its hardening and demoralizing tendency; as, for instance, in his abandonment of the affectionate mother of his child, his virtual wife in the Divine sight. But later on, when the heart of the priesthood became, in a large degree, petrified by these rigid teachings, as to the general and final reprobation of mankind, and when the clergy, as a body, became more or less indurated in feeling through the operation of their own enforced disobedience to the natural and Divine law of marriage, these perversions of doctrine and practice culminated in the awful Inquisition and its extreme blasphemies against Christ. It was no mere poetic licence which prompted Sir Walter Scott, for example, to depict, in "Marmion," the mode of death inflicted, by a brutalized sacerdotalism, upon poor Constance at Holy Isle. For to this day, especially in various parts of the European Continent, remain the sickening signs and incontrovertible evidences of the revolting cruelties long inflicted upon myriads of the very best men and women, by the special teachers of the dogma of eternal torment. They sought, as far as practicable, to illustrate and initiate its agonies in their own secret chambers, subterranean dungeons and shambles of human butchery.

"Still and abundantly the traveller meets with visible evidences of the immeasurable agony, which, for long ages, characterized the priestly administrations of the rack, the stake, the red-hot pincers, the wallings-up and buryings alive, the scaldings to death, the mutilations, the impalements of the innocent upon sharp spikes and knives in dark, deep pits, or

between the crushing arms of "the Virgin's embrace," in those hideous dens of appalling wickedness. The black dungeon, with depth beneath depth, in many feudal castles, tends to produce a shudder in the observer. The torture chambers of mediæval civilian administration, as still to be seen at Nuremberg, reveal worse proofs of cruelty. But the most appalling and most numerous evidences of penal or persecuting atrocity, are associated with the ecclesiastical Inquisitions of Spain and Italy. These especially tended to brutalize the prison administration of Europe for centuries; and, indeed, their indirect influence is still visible in some of the establishments, institutions, and practices connected with the world's Penology. It would need but brief time to demonstrate that these horrors of the Inquisition, and of ancient secret imprisonment, were amongst the logical consequences of the dogma of 'eternal torment,' united with the assumption of the right of persecution for differences of religious opinion. For the same influences were manifest in Protestant professors of the same belief; as in Henry the Eighth, in whose reign 60,000 persons were executed; and in many Calvinists and Puritans in so far as their comparatively limited powers of authority enabled them to act similarly. Thus, Calvin himself promoted the burning of Servetus; Puritans hanged Quakers in New England; Scotch bigots, of the iconoclastic Knoxian era, and later, manifested such a hard and persecuting spirit as to lead Milton to declare that "New Presbyter is but old priest writ large;" and that grimly pious Calvinistic leader, Dr. Cotton Mather, superintended the execution, in one day, of five unfortunate wretches charged with witchcraft. But all such professed Christianity was diametrically opposed to the example and teaching of the Divine Founder of the Church.

"In our more enlightened age, perhaps the strongest disproof of the dogma of 'eternal torment' is afforded by the lives of those very persons, as a class, who most emphatically profess to believe it. For these, as with one voice, nullify and contradict in action their own profession. They enjoy life and prosperity as cheerfully as any other persons, and participate, with as keen a zest as any, in the comforts, luxuries, and festivities of existence. They happily marry, and beget large families; whilst some of the most prominent amongst their number achieve a notoriety even as pulpit-jesters. But such easy, joyous existence is utterly incompatible with any genuine belief in the general consignment of mankind to hopelessly unending burnings. None who really held that doctrine could live in criminal disregard of all the souls in such tremendous peril. Yet only at rare intervals has the world seen some honest and ap-

proximately consistent advocate of that view, whose life confirmed his opinion; as for instance, such zealous souls as Brainerd, Carey, and Martyn, quitting life's ease and rest to agonize, till the last breath, for the salvation of a world, whose Divine Disposer, even these good men virtually held to be less merciful than themselves.

"This dogma is now increasingly rejected by the churches, and especially denied, in practice, by its own professors. It has flagrantly failed to become an effectual moral restraint, either from sin against God, or from crime against man. On the contrary, it has led millions to blaspheme the former, and thousands to torment the latter."

THE BOSTON COUNCIL.—It is pitiful to read through the account of the examination of the Rev. W. H. Noyes, before a council in which some of the foremost men among the Congregationalists sat, and to discover that neither Mr. Noyes nor his examiners seem ever to have discerned the true Scripture ground of hope for the dead, which he still feels that he must cherish. There is no allusion to the hope of resurrection as having anything to do with this problem, and for all the use these wise men made of it, it might as well have been left out of Scripture. Their eyes are holden through bondage to traditional notions of the final judgment.

Mr. Noyes said, "as to future things, I believe that the supreme fact revealed is the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in glory to judgment. Christ's judgment will not be arbitrary, but in righteousness, according to His gospel. This judgment, I believe, is final. The wicked shall forever depart from God, but the righteous shall forever live with God. I believe that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God, and each one of us shall give account of himself to God, whose servant each one is, and before whom each standeth or falleth."

The fatal defect here is:

1. In referring our Lord's words about future judgment to a remote assize, whereas He carefully insisted that He should begin His work of judgment with His exaltation to be both Lord and Christ—before that generation passed away.

2. In overlooking the most important factor in His work as

Judge, which He declares to be the resurrection of all the dead (see John, v. 22-29), "that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." Scripture places all its hope for the dead in the hope of their resurrection. Mr. Noyes fixes it in an intermediate state before resurrection. He overlooks the redemptive character of this change, and places all possible changes for the better before it. To the wicked, death and destruction lie before this change. Judgment, as a sentence, precedes it; as discipline and restraint, it follows it. But resurrection is essentially the opening of the prison doors of hell to them who had been bound in it. It is not risen men, but living nations, to whom the Judge says, "Depart ye cursed." It is this mislocation of judgment, and this denial of any redemptive feature in the provision to raise the unjust, that throws these brethren into confusion upon this whole subject.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

From the numerous cordial letters we have received, approving of our purpose to continue this magazine, we have room for only partial extracts:

From a Congregational clergyman:

Thanks be unto God for the tidings this morning in your Dec. No., that the Magazine is to be continued another year. I was just about to write you in order to speak of that most suggestive article in the November No., on the Resurrection of the Just. I now enclose five dollars to cover my annual subscription, and my mite toward supplying deficiencies. Your present article on Robert Elsmere, and the Note on *Nerve of Missions*, are close to the point. So is the article, "Our Lord's use of the term Fire." That the blessed Spirit may teach and support you, is my earnest prayer.

From a clergyman in Lausanne, Switzerland:

I read monthly your WORDS OF RECONCILIATION with great sympathy and interest. I find it most valuable, and I hope it

will be continued. I beg to enclose my subscription for the next year. Should you, to my great regret, discontinue your publication, my contribution might be used by you for the spreading of the truth, which we think so urgent and vital.

From a subscriber in Princeton:

I am thankful you so bravely go on with your noble mission in our dear Lord's service. You will reap a sure reward here, as well as in the ages to come. I read your precious words, and repeat them to many friends, who have never an answer, but I suppose, *fear* to believe. I own and read with delight your "Mystery of Creation and of Man." No volume in my library gives me such grand views and satisfactory ideas.

From a College President in New England:

I enclose one dollar for a year's subscription. You are doing a good work in disturbing a repose in the Church, which is a close counterfeit of death.

From an aged friend in Oregon:

Had my physical health been equal to my desires, you would have received from my hands a number of subscriptions to your precious little monthly, but I have to be satisfied to do what good I can in sending forth my own copy. How slow of heart we are to believe all that has been predicted in relation to Christ as Redeemer, Priest and King!

From a Christian husband and wife in Massachusetts:

Dear Brother in Christ. We are exceedingly rejoiced to know that you intend to continue to publish WORDS OF RECONCILIATION. We believe God has called you to that special work, and we wish to express our thankfulness to you and to Him for the light that has dawned upon us through the reading of your pamphlet. The Bible is a new book to us, and we see Christ a mightier Saviour than had ever entered our conception. No wonder much people in heaven sing, "Hallelujah, salvation and glory and honor and power, unto the Lord our God;" and we can echo back the chorus from our hearts.

From a friend in Oneida County, New York:

I send you in this five dollars which, small as is the gift, will help a little to preach the Resurrection of Hope. I have read

your "Mystery of Creation" and the "Fire of God's Anger," and read regularly the WORDS OF RECONCILIATION. I believe you read and interpret the Scriptures rightly in regard to the resurrection. A resurrection which means hope beyond the grave for the human race explains not only the importance which is attached to Christ's resurrection in the New Testament, but it also solves the mystery of Creation by making it but the first stage in the discipline of God's creatures, until in the end the fire of His anger—burning always *against* the sin, while His love burns *for* the sinner—shall have burned up the last vestige of chaff and left only wheat for His garner. I thank you for the light and joy which your labor of love has brought to me, and I trust that God will make you happy and strong for His work.

From a lady friend in New York:

Allow me to express my gratification that you have decided to continue the Magazine, and to enclose my check for three subscriptions; the balance to be used in sending the Magazine to any clergymen you think would be glad to have it, who are unable to subscribe.

I want to thank you for your excellent review of the much talked of novel. You have covered one or two points I have not seen noticed before. A question of *fact* comes up in my mind: Does any one know in *real* life a Robert Elsmere? Is there so saintly, so self-sacrificing, so devout a man—one who is living for Christ and his brethren—who is a mere theist?

"MAY her ministers ever be men whom no earthly advantages will tempt to sign what they do *not* believe, and no earthly loss will deter from avowing what they do believe."—*From Dr. Guthrie's address when elected Moderator of the Free Church Assembly*, 1862.

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THE RESURRECTION BODY.

A brother for whom we entertain a high regard, and whose withdrawal from the Presbyterian ministry a few years ago was a marked event in his section, writes to us in a kindly spirit as follows :—

"Your views in many respects are not mine, but I enjoy the 'WORDS,' and think it will have a good influence. Many persons, especially in the Church from which you withdrew, need help to a better understanding of God's fatherly unchangeable goodness and mercy. There is no danger of exaggeration on this subject: 'His mercy endureth forever.'

"I do not believe that the material body was ever intended to be man's eternal abode, that separation from it is a penalty of violated law, or that man's return to it is ever possible, as the butterfly never returns to its cast-off shell, the bird never returns to the egg-shell, nor the oak to the acorn. God never takes steps backward. If Christ had redeemed the material body, it would not die. But I see very well that if the resurrection in the form of the continued personal, conscious, embodied existence takes place, as I believe, immediately on the death of the material body, you can say about this resurrection life, all you could say about it in any other form or at any other time. That is, the point you emphasize is not a particular manner of the resurrection, so much as the fact that whenever or

however it does occur, it is redemptive, a blessing to every one, a curse to none. Now, that is all very good, but I feel very sure that the only resurrection and the only life, worthy of the name, in the Divine regard, is the resurrection to a higher life in Christ Jesus—into the at-one-ment with God; and the only death man needs to dread is not his departure from this world, is not annihilation, if that were possible, but simply the death to the higher possibilities of man's nature involved in exclusive development of what is lowest in him, in being permanently carnally minded. But lamentable as this state must be to those who know of anything better, I do not think that we are authorized in regarding it as only a state of misery to those who are in it. The swine may enjoy as much in its way, according to its capacity, as the sheep, the carnal man as the spiritual, the devil as the angel. Nor can I think that infinite love would deny any of its creatures, even the lowest (and none can be lower than they are capable of being), the gratifications of their life, except as far as these may be sought at an expense of other's well being. So I understand the statement, 'These shall go away into everlasting restraint' (pruning), where every tendency to seek personal comfort by injustice or injury to others will be nipped every time in the bud.

"The Lord bless, cheer and prosper you in your work."

Our friend has noticed our remarks in previous numbers upon the point he speaks of, that the principle that resurrection has a redemptive value is equally applicable, no matter what view one holds as to the time and nature of it. Here we agree. His dissent from our views covers specially these two points.

1. He holds that resurrection in all cases is immediate.

2. He denies that it is of the material body.

1. We have admitted that no long interval can occur in the case of those who are in Christ, and who therefore are

partakers in His risen life; although a principle of eclecticism seems to prevail concerning even them. Otherwise, we cannot understand St. Paul's desire to attain "if by any means unto the resurrection from among (exanastasis) the dead." The principle "every man in his own order," seems to provide for priority in time as well as rank. Our principle objection, however, to the immediate resurrection of all, both good and bad, is that the idea of death is thereby minimized and even negatived. Our correspondent makes death to be simply "the death of the higher possibilities of man's nature involved in the exclusive development of what is lowest in him—in being permanently carnally minded." The man continues, however, to live on; he is only dead in sin. Every one admits that this spiritual death is inseparable from the state of alienation from God. But is this all that was contained in the original sentence, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die?" As we read the narrative man was created in the image of God and assigned to the place of ownership and control in this created system. The natural man proved unworthy and incapable of this high trust. He must therefore be set aside, in order that a new creation of humanity in Christ Jesus may take his place. The mode of his eviction out of his estate is by death. Death is the dissolution of man's being as at first constituted. The body goes back to dust, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. But it was the inbreathing of this spirit or breath of God that made man a living soul. The soul therefore, as we are plainly taught in the New Testament, may be destroyed (Matt. x. 24) and lost (xvi. 26). This, occurring after the death of the body, completes the loss of life. The

spirit that animated the man survives, but whether as part of the universal life, or as a separate existence, is not made plain. At all events the self-conscious, personal man is dead, and can only be restored to life and tenure in the new system of which he was an appointed heir, by resurrection from the dead. Hence the pre-eminent importance the Scriptures attach to resurrection. Hence its vital place in the scheme of redemption, and of creation also. For if man be not raised from the dead, the system ends in abortion. Hence the enthronement of Jesus over all its forces, its principalities and powers.

All this class of truth, so deeply inwrought in Scripture, is not provided for in our brother's idea of death, which makes it simply to be carnally minded, and in his idea of resurrection, which makes it simply spiritual quickening. No interval of cessation of being, of ejectment into the outer darkness, of penal bondage in the prison house of death, is provided for in that view. And resurrection is no proper release from captivity, nor return to life and conscious personality, nor rehabilitation of man in the estate out of which he was cast.

But if ours be the true view of death and resurrection, we find abundant reason why the recovery to life cannot be immediate. Scripture is careful to inform us that even the Son of Man did not rise again until the third day. Those who sleep in Him, and who are joint heirs with Him, may also have speedy deliverance. And concerning their souls, we are assured that, unlike what happens in the case of the wicked, their souls are *saved* through the crisis of death. But the ungodly must perish. They must be destroyed *as men*, or the sentence against them will not be

carried out. And the more evil their character the deeper must be this destruction, and the more prolonged their banishment and captivity in the bands of death. This seems to be required by all principles of law, human or divine, and it accords with the uniform teaching of the Old Testament, that the dead are held as prisoners in a land of silence; that they know not anything; that they cannot praise God (Eccles. ix. 5, 10; Ps. vi. 5; cxv. 17; Job vii. 21); and also with the New Testament conception of the dead as perished until they are raised out of death; excepting, of course, that class of whom Jesus says, "They shall never perish."

2. With regard to the second point, that resurrection is not of the material body, we agree with our correspondent, if by it he means that this gross body of flesh and blood is not restored. He admits, however, that embodiment enters into the idea of resurrection. The only question, therefore, is, "With what body do they come?" We are not anxious to define this point, except so far as to say that it is essential in our idea of resurrection, as the reinvestment with man with foothold and title in creation, that he should have a body. Our ownership in this present natural system, our contact with it, our channel of intercourse with it, and our use and control of it, is through the present body. In that higher sphere of control into which Jesus was raised, and from which He shall even transform and glorify the creature, we cannot conceive that man can possess and administer this estate without a body that shall bring him into relations to it analogous to those he now holds. The glorified Jesus is the embodied Image of God. And our bodies must be fash-

ioned like unto His when we shall perfectly bear that image. To most of this our correspondent would doubtless assent.

As to the kind of body the unjust will take on, all we know is that it will be formed in obedience to the principle "To every seed his own body." "Every one must receive in body according to the things done." The body must always be the proper vesture of the life and character. It is fair to infer, however, that a penal dissolution of the earthly body, involving the loss of the soul, clears the way for a new experiment in life. The lesson of the old failure could not be otherwise than corrective. This class of the dead, however, can only come forth to a resurrection of judgment. They must be kept under discipline and restraint. And this implies a lower form of embodiment. Only one form of embodied life is raised superior to all earthly and material conditions—the heir and sovereign of all things. Every lower order must be in more or less bondage. St. Paul teaches that as "all flesh is not the same flesh," "so also is the resurrection of the dead." As there is great variety among bodies terrestrial, there will be also among bodies celestial. And here we find the basis for the distinction we have insisted upon between the resurrection of just men who are not saints and that of the unjust. The one are set free to enter into life and to attain to the heights of eternal life and blessedness; the other are kept still in bonds and under trial, and exposed to the peril of a second death. Nothing is more manifest than that the discipline of human souls is going on all around us, according to these principles. Body is expressive of character. Souls are bound or loosed on earth through

the bodies they take on. It will be so in the world to come. Beyond this principle we know nothing of the nature of the bodies in which the mass of mankind are restored to another life and heritage in the system of God's works. We only know that such resurrection is in all cases redemptive; for the state of death out of which it lifts the man is essentially the penal state. And there would be no object in bringing him again out of it if he were to be at once thrust back.

The defect we find, therefore, in our friend's view is not so much in what it includes as in what it leaves out. It does not take in all the facts. It makes death to be merely a lower form of life. There is no penal ejectment of man out of his inheritance, and resurrection is no restoration to a forfeited estate. All that he says about spiritual death as being the one thing to be feared is true. But it is just as well provided for in our view. Alienation from God is called death, because it surely ends in the actual death of those who depart from Him: "Whose end is destruction." But it would be wrong to attach to this adjunct, or, if you please, this originating cause of death, such importance as to sink out of sight the great calamity to which it leads. Death is something more than a mere shifting of the conditions of life. It is the deprivation of life itself. And although Scripture does speak of persons as dead who are only dead in sin, it is because such persons have that virus of evil in them which makes death their sure portion. And for such there is no hope beyond death, except as the power of God, who alone quickeneth the dead, shall reach and recover them to life through a resurrection from the dead.

DESTRUCTION.

The word "destruction" in Scripture does not by any means always imply a ruin that is final and irrevocable. It is often applied to persons and things in cases where the destruction was to be followed by a reconstruction.

1. It is often used as the equivalent of death, e. g., Gen. vi. 7, "I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth." Deut. ix. 3. "The Lord thy God goeth before thee as a consuming fire. He shall destroy them . . . and make them to perish quickly." Ps. xc. 3, "Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men." Ps. ciii. 4, "Who redeemeth thy life from (out of) destruction." A death or destruction cannot be final and absolute out of which there is to be a resurrection. The promise of resurrection, which the faith of Old Testament saints more or less fully grasped, was God's answer to the mystery of death which seemed to destroy them without hope. Their trial, under the darkness of this mystery, found utterance in such words as these.

"Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall they that are deceased arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, or thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? Ps. lxxxviii. 10–13.

This indeed is the glad tidings of the Gospel, that God has redeemed our lives out of this pit of destruction—this the crowning proof of His faithfulness and of His wonder-working power and grace, that He raised up Jesus to be

a Prince and Saviour, in whom the free gift of another life beyond the grave is made secure to all men.

When, therefore, the New Testament speaks of a class of men "whose end is destruction," "who shall be punished with eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power," the question at once arises: Is this threatened punishment inflicted before or after their resurrection? Manifestly the latter one of these passages refers to a class of men living on the earth and arrested in their disobedience and false security by the sudden coming of their day of judgment. "For when they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, and travail as upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape" (1 Thes. v. 1–3). Neither this class, nor those mentioned in the first chapter of the next epistle, are to be viewed as dead men raised. And therefore the destruction, even if it be "eternal," cannot set aside God's purpose of resurrection. Rather must we regard that purpose as putting its limit upon the meaning of that word. A destruction that is some day to be followed by a reconstruction cannot be endless. There may, indeed, be a second death beyond this recovery from the first death. But we certainly are not warranted by the usage in either the Old or New Testaments to infer from the term "destruction" that the ruin it describes is hopeless. If God is the destroyer, He is also the Saviour of men. "I wound and I heal, I kill, and I make alive" (Deut. xxxii. 24, 39).

"Thou turnest man to destruction, and sayest, Return, ye children of men." Jesus says of the men of Noah's day that "the flood came and destroyed them all," and of the Sodomites that "it rained fire and brimstone from

heaven and destroyed them all" (St. Luke xvii. 27–29). Manifestly this destruction was to be followed by a resurrection. And all these passages, including the eternal destruction of 2d Thes. i. 9, must be interpreted in subordination to this "hope of the dead."

THE INTERMEDIATE STATE.

The doctrine of a prolonged middle state between death and resurrection has been long held in the Christian Church and is still generally accepted. It has however but small support from Scripture. What this state is, is not clearly defined. It is not death, for the activities, the pleasures and the pains of life are experienced there. Many believe that probation is there continued, the fixed destiny of the soul not being determined until a final judgment day.

The doctrine rests mainly upon two passages—the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, and the reply of Jesus to the dying thief, "Verily I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." The force of this last passage is disputed from two directions: 1. By those who regard the adverb "to-day"—as put in contrast with the thief's request to be remembered when the Lord should come in His kingdom. He assures him that he need not wait for his welcome until then. Verily I say unto thee *to-day*, Thou shalt be with me in Paradise. 2. By its apparent conflict with the statement of the creed "He descended into hell," and with the words of Christ, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, even

so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

This doctrine of an intermediate state of blessedness and activity (it is also assumed that our Lord preached to "spirits in prison" during that interval) minimizes both the idea of death and the idea of resurrection. A person in such a state can not properly be said to be dead; nor would his resurrection be an awakening of the dead to life.

With respect to the story of Dives and Lazarus,—a parable is always an uncertain basis on which to build important doctrine. Moreover, if it be taken as literal narative, it leaves the question open whether the rich man's soul was not undergoing destruction in hell (Matt. x. 24)—the process of death in him being uncompleted—and whether Abraham, whom Jesus classifies (Mark xii. 27) as among the living, and Lazarus, who was received to his bosom, were not risen from the dead. Especially may this be held if resurrection be not restricted in meaning to the resurrection of the body. Scripture refuses to tie the word down to corporeal conditions. There is, we believe, such a thing as resurrection of the soul; for soul is distinct from spirit, and is its finer embodiment. And since the soul of the good man is never lost in death, its speedy resuscitation would seem to be a stage in the progress of his resurrection, to be completed in the future glorification of his whole humanity. Neither of these passages, therefore, is so conclusive as to set aside the current Scripture testimony to the true nature of death as the cessation of life.

And this is the insuperable objection to the common doctrine of a long, undetermined middle state between death and resurrection—that Scripture does not consent to this

mode of minimizing death, nor does it hold out the hope of a future life in any other form than through the resurrection of the dead. This was the point of our Lord's reply to the Sadducees, before referred to. "As touching the dead that they rise," He affirmed that the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was not the God of dead, but of living men. These men, therefore, must have been risen from the dead. So the argument of St. Paul to the Corinthians, some of whom said that the dead rise not, assumes that the hope of a future existence turns upon this point, that Christ was raised, and that in Him all shall be made alive. For, if the dead rise not, even the saints who have fallen asleep in Him have perished. Every reader of the New Testament will observe how constantly it sets forth this "hope and resurrection of the dead," and how closely it connects it with the hope of a future life. If there be a middle state, therefore, it cannot be placed between death and resurrection, otherwise the dead are no more dead, but between what may be differing stages in the progress of resurrection. If believers may be said to be already "risen with Christ" (Col. iii. 1), why may we not regard this change as having these two well-marked stages—the resurrection of the soul, which is a part of man distinct from the spirit and his more subtle embodiment, and the resurrection of the body as that investiture which shall place man in his destined position as the owner and lord of this created system. At all events we must hold fast to the idea that future life and blessedness come through resurrection if we would be true to Scripture, and we must learn to look upon this change as not all postponed to a distant judgment day. If our friends are now living and blessed in

Christ's presence, they must be risen from the dead. Dead men are not capable of such activity and sensation.

This idea of a long middle state of life between death and resurrection has been further bolstered by the fiction that hades long precedes gehenna, and that none are cast into this lake of fire until after their resurrection. The Lord always speaks of gehenna as a peril of which man in his present embodiment is in danger. We have to put upon His words in Mark ix and elsewhere a strain they will not bear to make them refer to a future risen body. Even the sentence in Matt. xxv, "Depart ye cursed into eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels" is, on the face of it, spoken to nations living on the earth at His coming, and not to dead men raised. No, gehenna is a present fact, and men are all the time being cast into it, and Christ is now judging men, and He is now the resurrection and the life. And if any of the dead are now alive they must have been quickened out of death by Him, and such as are still held fast in the bands of death are slumbering among the dead awaiting His summons. If He went as a herald to preach unto spirits in prison, it was to arouse them out of the sleep of death. He is now the Christ, the Judge of quick and dead, and His work of ruling and judging and awakening the dead is now going on. No long intermediate state must pass before He can enter upon these high offices. Nor can there be such a state of continued probation for those who fail in this life. When a man dies his account for this life is closed, the issue is determined, the sentence passed. If He has failed to enter into life, he must serve out his death-penalty. The door of hope can be opened to him again only through

resurrection. Renewed life must bring with it again the opportunities which pertain to life. But the Bible knows nothing of life renewed in any other way than through resurrection from the dead.

NEED OF RELIEF.

Nothing is more sure than that our Evangelical Churches will have to rid themselves of the incubus of theological formulas which they have outgrown, and which their ministry are compelled to receive with a mental reservation or a qualm of conscience. Either their Christianity is a failure, or it will constrain them to right themselves in this matter before God and man.

No observer of the changes going on in these churches will fail to see how strongly the drift is in this direction. In the Episcopal Church such men as Archdeacon Farrar preach the gospel of eternal hope. And few of their prominent preachers are without some sympathy with it.

In the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, such men as the Rev. Marcus Dods, D. D., and Professor Candlish are open advocates of a revised confession. Such men as Professor Charles A. Briggs in this country openly commend Dorner to their students as the type of healthy progress in theology. Even in Princeton no one any longer hears the eschatology of Princeton preached. A Presbyterian elder writes to the New York Evangelist, imploring the Church to relieve the consciences of the elders, and of men who are sought out for that office, from the dishonesty of subscription to statements on matters of great concern

which they no longer fully believe. The best pulpits of that denomination would be inaccessible to any man who proposed to preach from them in an honest way some of the doctrines of its own standards. Imagine Dr. John Hall, for example, preaching to his Fifth avenue congregation—as he ought to preach, if true—that all unbelievers will be punished "with most grievous and unspeakable torments without intermission, with the devil and his angels, in hell fire forever." Jonathan Edwards preached consistently in this way. If he were alive to-day, however, he would offer himself in vain for a call to any metropolitan church. Nor could he be re-elected as president of Princeton College. The fact is, the Church has grown into a larger conception of the Fatherhood of God, of His thoughts of kindness toward the human race, of the wide sweep of His redeeming grace. Therefore it is that good men, ministers and laymen, in all the churches—for Baptist, Methodist and all churches breathe this new air of a larger hope—are coming to the conviction, albeit an unexpressed one, that the new era of light must let in its light upon the old creed, and cast out whatever there is in it of the night and of darkness.

The chief reason why there is no more pronounced movement in this direction is that men do not like to cut away from the old moorings without knowing where they are to land. The principal solutions of the problem yet proposed do not fully satisfy, and they are without sufficient scriptural support. The Roman Catholic theory of purgatory came as a relief to its dark theology. For, as the whole community of Christendom were baptized, few of them were consigned to an eternal hell. The modern solution

most in favor is that probation is continued in an intermediate state for those who have not decisively rejected Christ. This theory connects itself with and grows out of the traditional view that there is to be a final judgment day at which the eternal destiny of all human souls is to be fixed. The intermediate state becomes thus an undetermined state.

But the support of this view is derived mainly from inferences and from the region of human hopes. The definite statements of Scripture are that the sinner meets his penalty at death. Death is uniformly defined as the wages of sin. The sinner passes out of this life under the power of death, and is held captive by it. Sheol or Hades is the place of penalty. Dives lifted up his eyes in hades, being in torment. Gehenna is a *present* fact, and there is no warrant for the current fiction that the destruction in it of body and soul, of which Jesus spoke, relates to a future resurrection body, and not to this present embodiment by which man inherits the earth. For these reasons we have earnestly insisted that the true key to the whole of this dark problem lies in the doctrine of the resurrection, and that whatever future administrations of grace may be purposed by God toward lost man must lie beyond that event, and not in any imagined intermediate state before it. This view is far more simple and scripturally consistent. It puts that estimate on death which is everywhere placed upon it in Scripture. It is God's appointed penalty for sin. And bondage in this condition—the death-state so long as it lasts—is penal. The eternal fire, the agent in this dissolution of man's being, is the name for the whirling forces of nature which destroy men in body and soul—

both here and beyond the grave. In this view man's judgment precedes his death sentence. It regards the Lord Christ as already administering His office as Judge of the quick and dead, in accordance with His own word that He would enter upon His kingdom before that generation passed away. We are thus saved from the confusion of the common view of a preliminary judgment and casting into hell, to be followed by another judgment and sentence to hell. Every idea of death and judgment and resurrection is marred in such a scheme. And this indeed is its crowning absurdity, that it makes the provision to restore from death the human race by a Redeemer to be not only without meaning or result—it becomes to all but the elect, an inexpressible cruelty.

If death be the wages of sin, why bring a man out of death in order to kill him a second time? If hades be the sinner's prison-house, why compel it to give up the dead for the sake of sending him back to hell? If judgment has already been executed upon him, why stand him up again before the judgment seat? If any one sits down to examine Scripture upon these points without prejudice or prepossession, he will soon see that if the terms death and resurrection and judgment be given their proper meaning, and our Lord's words upon these terms be taken at their face value, no room will be left for such incongruities as these in the divine procedure. It will be seen that the messenger of God's vengeance against sin, death, meets man even in this world to destroy him out of it, and pursues him beyond it until even the soul is lost, and the prison-house of sheol closes its gates upon him, until He who alone holds its keys sets the captive free. The death-state remains the

penal-state, prolonged and deepened according to the deserts of each. Judgment is executed, the law satisfied, before there is room for any intervention in the sinner's behalf, or any room for another trial in life. Even the heathen, who have not heard of Christ, and in whose behalf the theory of intermediate probation is specially invoked, must first go down to death under the race-penalty for sin, and for their own sins. "Every man in his own order," and "according to deeds done" is the universal law of harvest by which these fields of death must be reaped.

But resurrection—what can it be but a deliverance? What life after death can there be without it? The saints are viewed in Scripture as sure of such a life because they are already risen with Christ. And all men are destined to another life, because "as in Adam all died, so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order." He gave himself a "ransom for all, the testimony to be borne in its own times." We have no idea that all the dead, just and unjust, are to be raised together. We believe not only that the hour is coming, but that it *now is*, when the dead hear the voice of the Son of God and live. We know not what multitudes of captives may have already been set free. But quite sure we are that there is no life beyond the grave except through a resurrection of the dead. This is the name which Scripture always gives to the future life—resurrection—and by this we abide.

So that from every point of view this doctrine of death as the penalty of sin, and of resurrection as God's gracious arrest of this penalty, and as the restoration of man to both the privileges and the responsibilities of another life, graded according to character, and still beset with peril for all who

are not raised in the likeness of Christ, meets all the conditions, and explains all the difficulties. We are sure that in the present fusion and ferment of ideas on this grave subject, this principle of redemptive resurrection is the one about which the new forms of faith will crystallize and become clear and sparkling with the light of God's glory as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ.

THE TRUE GOD.

"He who has a false idea or conception of God is an idolater, worshipping an idea or image formed by his own imagination or reason."

"If a man has a false idea of God, his love of God is the love of an untruth, and everything will be in some degree wrong with him from centre to circumference—morally, mentally and physically."

"The wrong idea of God is the secret of all the ignorance and misery of the world, of its sins and diseases, its false religions, false philosophies and false sciences."

"When the figures are wrong at the beginning—and a true or false idea of God is always the beginning—the sum gets more and more incorrect at every successive step of an endless problem."

"It is necessary to erase our whole series of calculations and to return to first principles, the absolute truth about God (whom to know is life eternal), and from that truth as a divine center, to reconstruct and restate all our knowledge—our theology, our metaphysics and our science."

The above aphorisms are none the less true because they occur in a series of "Condensed Thoughts about Christian Science." They illustrate and enforce the truth with which our Lord begins His last prayer for His disciples—

"That they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou has sent."

It is melancholy to reflect upon what false ideas of God the religions of the world have been based, and how these false ideas have even intruded and been wrought into the structure of the Christian Church. Men have conceived of Him as a monster of cruelty. They have represented Him, even in their creeds, as implacable, unmerciful. The definition of Him in the Shorter Catechism has been appealed to as an almost inspired utterance: "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth." But this presents by no means a perfect idea of God. The idea of His fatherhood, His bounty, His compassion, His forgiving grace to the returning prodigal—the comprehensive definition of Him as Love—much of all this is excluded from this Westminster statement. The term "goodness" is not the equivalent of the term "love." Nor is this essential idea of God given proper expression elsewhere in the Westminster Confession. It is fenced in all around by the limitations of a righteous wrath which must needs be appeased. A right idea of God is impossible in a theological system which turns His most gracious provision to redeem man's life from destruction into a means of perpetuating in endless misery the lives of a large proportion of His creatures. The Calvinistic theology, with all its massive elements of truth, is vitiated all through by its false idea of the purpose of God in providing to raise the dead. It was for this reason we sought, while identified with that system, to introduce at this point the entering wedge of a reform. And we have since persistently struck at this radical misconception of resurrec-

tion, by which it is stripped of all redemptive value except for the small number of the elect.

But more than this, we were convinced, not only from observation, but from painful personal experience, that the defective idea of God which prevails in that communion is bearing sad and bitter fruit in the lives and characters of its members. We know that there are many most excellent Christian people trained up in Calvinistic churches. But they are not of those who heartily and consistently adhere to the idea of God to which they stand committed. In all systems there are many who draw their religious teaching directly from the fountain of God's word, and who are taught by His Spirit much beyond the limits of their own system. But it is also true that the lives of many excellent and pious people have been narrowed and embittered by the false ideas of God in which they have been trained, and which have coiled like a worm around this very root of their religious life, stunting its growth, blighting its beauty, and marring all its fruits. "This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only *true* God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

"ANGRY WITH THE WICKED."

In Psa. 7 : 11 we read :—"God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day."

Infidels, and the various classes of skeptics, frequently bring this passage as an objection to the character of our heavenly Father ; claiming that He requires us to be patient with one another, while He is not so toward the er-

ring. Of course, every day's observation goes to contradict any such assumption; but we think that a careful investigation of this verse will throw light upon the subject.

The VULGATE reads: "God is a judge, righteous, strong, and patient;—will He be angry every day?"

The SEPTUAGINT: "God is a righteous judge, and strong, and patient; not inflicting vengeance every day."

The ARABIC is the same.

The ÆTHIOPIC: "God is a just judge, and strong and long-suffering; He will not bring forth tribulation daily."

COVERDALE: "God is a righteous judge, and God is ever threatening."

The GENEVAN VERSION: "God judgeth the righteous, and him that contemneth God every day."

The SYRIAC: "God is the judge of the righteous; He is not angry every day."

Dr. Clarke remarks, "The mass of evidence supports the latter reading." The words *with the wicked* are not in the original MSS. The idea is that the Lord is not punishing people daily for their iniquities; as we read, "Because sentence against an evil is not executed *speedily*, therefore the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil."—Eccles. 8: 11. The Lord is *very* "*patient*," and "long-suffering" towards those who commit sin, and urges them to repent. Let us all listen to His kind voice.

Selected.

STRONG AT THE CENTRE.

The Christian needs to be made strong at the centre of his life, in order to prepare him for contact with the evil

which lies all around the periphery of it. The centre of the life is in God. Every man gets his life from Him. In Him we live and move and have our being. Most men, however, have lost the consciousness of this life in God. It is submerged beneath the cares and material conditions under which men must live their life in this world. But the Christian has come to know God in Christ, and that his life is now hidden in Him. His sanctification consists in the subjection of all the outward circumstances of his life to this Divine Spirit of life which lives at the centre of it. The problem is to come out from under the domination of these things which are seen and temporal, these ever-shifting circumstances, of even these physical and material laws, as we call them, to which we are subject, so that God may rule in all this sphere, making even our bodies His temple, carrying all our burdens, restraining all evil appetites and tempers, and healing our diseases, both of mind and body. For this is the secret of that curative power, which, it is idle to deny, is frequently apparent among adherents whether of Faith-Cure or Christian Science. It is the result of new strength from this true centre of the life, pervading this region of circumstance and of temporal conditions, in the midst of which most of us are more or less in bondage, and in which morbid conditions of the mind reveal themselves in morbid states of the body.

What we all need therefore is this saving health—this peace of God flowing out from this centre, that so we may dwell in the secret place of the Most High and abide under the shadow of the Almighty. The promise then meets us "There shall no evil befall thee, nor shall any plague come

nigh thy dwelling." It is the privilege of the Christian to realize this blessed experience far beyond what has been true of us in the past.

But how shall we be made thus strong at the centre of our being? In the first place we must believe that God indeed dwells there, that we are in Him, and He in us. We need to meditate much upon this truth until it becomes more than a theory—even a fact, the deepest fact in our lives. To fill the mind with good and true thoughts is to displace and drive out evil thoughts, and the morbid states of mind and body which they engender. We would be surprised, if we have never tried it, how upon the wings of right thoughts of God, there will steal through all the region of the life purifying and healing streams from this Fountain of Life. Prayer is good—indispensable; but this meditative prayer—this waiting upon God and communion with Him through His own Word of Life is especially His appointed means by which we come into fellowship with Him. His word is able to save the soul and to build it up unto life eternal.

Not less important are acts appropriate to the Christian life. "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with Him." "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Any act of obedience, of love to God or man—for if we love not our own brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen—will bring to us a new sense of His presence, and a new peace and strength into these lives which sin has so disordered and dis.ased.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

WE hope hereafter to give place in each number to some thoughts bearing upon the practical life of the Christian, and the development in our readers of that life and love in God which is better than knowledge, and which is indeed a condition precedent thereto. Only he that loveth can know God, and though we speak with the tongues of men or of angels and know all mysteries, and have not love, it profiteth us nothing.

CHURCH UNION IN JAPAN.—It is to be feared that the proposed union between the Congregationalists and Presbyterians in Japan, or rather between the converts made by the missionaries of these respective churches, will after all be prevented by the denominational jealousies arising here at home. If such should be the untoward result it would only prove that the movement does not go deep enough. It should embrace all the Christians in Japan, and union should be effected between them because they are already organically united into one body in Christ. They have, therefore, no more right to divide into sects and to do their work apart than the twelve tribes of Israel had the right each to set up a separate government. If they do not agree as to forms of government or worship or doctrine, then let them come together for prayer and conference, waiting before God until His will is made known, or some common ground is found upon which they can unite without compelling uniformity in non-essentials. It puts very little honor upon the word of the church's head, not to believe that His spirit is still so present in her as to guide her to a safe conclusion in a matter which is one of direct obedience to His last command. Let the church honestly say that she is afraid to trust her Lord to guide her into a true unity, or else let her set herself about this prime duty of seeking from Him that grace and wisdom which shall enable her to fulfill this primary condition of her own life and being—to realize and give expression to her oneness so that the world may see and believe.

It is interesting to observe that in the recent discussions had

in a meeting of these two bodies held in Osaka last November, the native Christians of Japan seemed to take a higher and more worthy view of the subject than the missionaries themselves. These latter seemed to be unable to forget that they were the representatives and servants of the Societies in this country who had sent them out. The *Independent* of January 3rd, gives extracts from several speeches made by the native delegates. They will be found interesting reading.

Mr. Ichihara, Principal of the Sendai School, said:—

"About twelve years ago, while over thirty of us Christians were in Kiushu, we wrote Mr. Neesima, asking him if his school was sectarian. We told him we disliked sect, but loved Christ, and if his school were not denominational we would like to go to it. He replied assuring us that his school was not denominational and therefore we all went to Kyoto. There we learned to think for ourselves, to examine all sides of a question, and to form independent conclusions. Now we are told by some that we must have intellectual union in order to have harmony in the churches. I deny it entirely. I appeal to my classmates here. Again and again we have had our intellectual battles and are having one now. But we are working together because we have a real heart union. And I look upon this proposed union of these two Churches as a formal expression of the real heart union that already exists between us."

Mr. Homma, pastor of one of the Osaka churches, said:—

"When I first became a Christian at Kobe, I was taught nothing of sect. Indeed, the missionaries seemed to avoid even my inquiries on this question, and taught me Christianity alone. Now it is true that we are very close to the Congregational polity, but we should ever bear in mind that we are not Congregationalists. Dr. Noble has told us that if we can do what Western Christians as yet have not been able to do, to go ahead with his blessing. Now we can and have already gone ahead of them. For one instance, here in Osaka are Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Episcopalians from England and America, and from their work fourteen churches have been formed. All but one use the same hymn book. American Christians can't do that yet. Again, fifteen hundred Christians and missionaries have met in our Y. M. C. A. Hall for preaching and communion. All stay through the preaching, but when it comes to the communion, all Japanese stay, but all the missionaries cannot. Sect prevents them from uniting, but we own no sect and therefore

can unite. Such illustrations as 'oil and water' may apply to the Presbyterians and Congregationalists of the Western world, but they have no application whatever to us. We are not Congregationalists and Presbyterians, we are *Kumi-ai* and *Itchi.*"

The Rev. Mr. Ise, from Tokyo, made a most effective address on "What is Sect? and What is a Church?" After defining these he said:

"No religious movement could ever have wide success on simply intellectual union. There are many things some of these foreign friends have kindly taught us that we cannot believe. We love them as our fathers in Christ, but we see that men who think, cannot all think alike. Shall we therefore separate? No, never. Gladly will we work with them, as we have heretofore, naturally respecting each other's shades of belief, and each other's differing ideas. Insist on intellectual union and our *Kumiai* churches must fly at once into half a dozen sects. I am receiving money from the American Board, and brothers on the other side are helping me to carry the glad news to my people. But has any one the right to say that I am an employee of the American Board? I hate the very idea of being a hireling. Never let the money question come in to blind us and rob us of our dignity and reason."

The Rev. Mr. Sugiyama, of Joshu, who, at the opening of the meeting had been strongly opposed to any discussion of the union, said that he was ready to favor union—but only on one condition, that the union should have no relation to any sect.

The Rev. Mr. Miyagawa, of Osaka, said:

"(1) In our creed let us have simplicity—a creed that will allow of liberty of thought and conscience. We are not bound to believe all our kind teachers tell us. We believe them, respect them, want them to teach us and work with us; but we must be allowed to grow. (2) As to government, I love freedom; but as we grow we must have some sort of government. So long, however, as the local church is the source of power, and independent in its own affairs, we need have no fear. (3) The system of courts and trials in the proposed Constitution troubles some people. Well, I've heard a rumor that the Presbyterians say they've had no use for those things for twenty years, and won't feel very bad if all that goes into an Appendix, as an example of how to do it in case of need. (4) As to our *Itchi* brothers, I hear that in their meeting only one or two are opposed to union. They all favor it for the sake of a more

rapid spreading of Christianity, and not at all as a sectarian victory. I shall have nothing to do with sect, even though it be Congregational. Let us have a Church unfettered with the names of Western sects—a Church of Christ."

The Rev. Mr. Matsuyama, for ten years associated with Dr. Greene and others in the translation of the Bible, said:

"It is half intimated by some that, in case we go into the union, the American Board will give us no more money. Then I say emphatically, let us totally separate. Let no one ever say we were slaves to foreign money. It cannot be that any one of our brothers across the ocean so think of us. No; let us rather see in their kind and prolonged help a heart of deep love for us, their faith in our loyalty to Christ."

An Elder's Complaint.—In a recent number of the New York *Evangelist*, a Presbyterian Elder complains as follows:—

"Is it not reasonable for a person to turn to the confession of faith to see what Presbyterians believe: and can we find fault with Ingersoll or any one else who brings this up against us? The confession of faith is a hindrance to the cause of Christ, and a stumbling-block to many a one. That so many are indolent or indifferent enough to be ignorant of what it teaches does not alter the case. We ought not to be hampered by a confession of a past generation, teaching doctrines which we, basing our faith on God's Word, cannot believe.

"I know of some good Christian brethren who have been deterred from accepting the office of elder because they could not hold the office conscientiously under the teaching of such doctrines. When called to the eldership myself, I made similar objections; and my pastor overcame my scruples by saying that as I accepted the general teaching of the confession I need not be considered as accepting every part. But I confess I don't like to be in such a position. A friend, upon union with the church, had a copy of the confession placed in his hands; it was a great hindrance in his Christian life.

"Let us have a confession of what we believe in this day, not what the Westminster divines believed."

We hope this elder will use his constitutional privilege, as we did, and ask his Presbytery to overture the General Assembly to take up the question of revision. It will have to come—many of the best men in the Church are persuaded of this—but the dread of disturbance and the fear of jeopardizing property

interests still prevail. When will the Church learn that it is her first business to be honest, and that upon no other basis has she the right to assume to speak from God to men.

NOT WANTED.—Occasionally a copy of this magazine is returned to us from some one or some institution to which it was sent, endorsed "Not Wanted." And why not wanted? Is it because the great principle to which it stands committed, that the redemption of all mankind from death conveys a blessing to all, is unscriptural and untrue? Not one of our critics has attempted to prove this. Rather is it not because this truth, when established, will overturn traditional opinions and disturb existing systems and vested rights, and compel the Church to begin her work from a new standpoint? But then can she ever do her appointed work without such disturbance? Must not some such angel as this gospel of the resurrection step down into this pool, and trouble its stagnant waters, before they shall have that virtue which shall make them the source of healing and life to all mankind?

IN HYPATIA,—Charles Kingsley relates as a fact the incident of an old Gothic warrior, a righteous and noble soul, converted to Christianity and about to be baptized. "When in the act of stepping into the font he suddenly turned to the bishop, and asked, where were the souls of his heathen ancestors? 'In hell,' replied the worthy prelate. The Goth drew back from the font, and threw his bearskin cloak around him, saying that he would prefer to go to his own people, and so refused to be baptized."

The Edinburg Scotsman sometime ago asked, How is it that with so many disputable and denied doctrines in the Standards (the Westminster Confession), containing about 16,000 propositions, that in successive generations ministers accept and sign it without any hesitation? * * * * It is a curious problem, which we can only explain by supposing that *perfect* belief is required only when we swear to one or two articles, but that a reduction is allowed, as by grocers, upon taking a quantity.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

From a lady subscriber:

"With many others, I am glad you find yourself able to continue the publication. It is certainly preaching the Gospel more effectively than from the pulpit. It is a great service to open the eyes of the blind."

From another:

"I cannot tell you with what unfeigned pleasure I read the first lines of your January number, announcing your decision to continue the magazine. I trust that it may be made less burdensome to you than it has been in the past, and that the friends whose hearts have been gladdened by the truths of hope and joy you have been the means of revealing to them, may be very ready with their sympathy and help."

Still another writes:

"The Lord God hath given you the tongue of the learned that you should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.

"I acknowledge with gratitude my own benefit from the "Words" as well as that of others to whom I have given them."

A friend writes from England:

"When once it is apprehended that the resurrection of man is the initial stage of his matter of fact salvation, current going theology is revolutionized, and the Divine plan purged from many blots with which purblind theologians (unintentionally no doubt) have obscured it. May you long be spared to carry on your work, and find abounding joy in every trial."

This friend does not mean, as we know from previous writings of his, that resurrection necessarily secures the salvation of all, but that it is God's way of bringing all within the sphere of that saving power of which the resurrection of Christ is the centre.

A lady writes from California:

"It was very pleasant, on receiving the December No. of your excellent Magazine, to learn that you had been led to continue its publication. Only lack of means had prevented my sending

you aid to this end, and I could only ask the Lord to open the hearts of such as were able. My own soul is refreshed by every number of your paper, and I greatly prize it. Many parts of the Scriptures, hitherto obscure, have been made plain, and I find a harmony in all that is delightful, and can look forward for the fulfilment of all God's purposes of love and grace to be unfolded in the ages to come. May the spirit of truth ere long open many blind eyes to see the truth as it is in Jesus."

An old friend writes:

"I read your WORDS with a great deal of interest, and am trying hard to get the truth, and hope, if you have not reached it yet, you may be successful in the end. It is a good deal like Life Insurance; a man must die in order to realize! So it is of the great truths you are writing upon from month to month. We shall know more bye and bye."

We have never claimed to reach the ultimate truth upon these deep subjects. We do not believe, however, that God has left us in such a haze of uncertainty as our friend implies. There is one guiding principle which is infallibly true to Scripture, and which will not lead us astray, and that is, that as death is the wages of sin, recovery from death, or resurrection, must be in the line of God's redemptive work. Our friend has been thrown into very close relations with Congregationalists, who are groping for light on these matters in the dream land of an intermediate state. Let them use the language of Scripture, and connect their hope of a future life, and their larger hope for the human race, with the hope of resurrection, and they will see that there is a very plain Star of Hope distinctly visible above the horizon of the future, and that we can make no mistake in following its beacon light.

From a Presbyterian pastor:

"I have just read the January number of WORDS OF RECONCILIATION with great interest. I am truly thankful that the Lord enables you to carry on your testimony. In the days of suspense about your continuing the publication, it was my prayer that the Lord would make the way clear for you to go on, if your testimony was according to His will. Now I pray that the Spirit of truth may guide you into all truth.

"One of our Presbyterian Journals lately gave utterance to

the sentiment, that whatever had the sanction of the example of Christ and the Apostles is good Presbyterianism. That's right and not new. But I have two applications of that principle, which seem not to have entered the minds of many who would be leaders in that church:

"1. In all the recorded discourses and the epistles of the Apostles, there is not one solitary instance of threatening or warning of "hell" or "endless torment," as the doom of those who die out of Christ. Yet all orthodox Christians regard these Apostles as the mouth-pieces of the risen and ascended Lord Jesus. And as you have abundantly shown, the Saviour Himself did not teach that traditional doctrine of the Presbyterian Church. Why is not the "example" good for the Presbyterian ministry now?

"2. The example of Christ and the Apostles is squarely opposed to the clamorous demand that if a minister discovers in the word of God truths that are not exactly adjustable to the tenets of the denomination to which he belongs, he must step down and out, or be denounced as lacking honesty. There can be no question that the teachings of Christ and the Apostles antagonized the current theology of the Jewish Church in their day, far more than the doctrine of redemptive resurrection, which you have shown to be scriptural, opposes the standard of the Presbyterian Church. But Christ and the Apostles did not withdraw or eject themselves from the Jewish Church. When the Lord stood before the High Priest, he said, 'I ever taught in the synagogue and in the Temple where all the Jews come together.' To his disciples he said: '*They* shall cast you out of the synagogue;' not, 'Put yourselves out.' The responsibility of their ejection was to rest where it belonged.

"And as in the Book of Discipline now in use, trials for heresy must be conducted with the *Scriptures* as the sole standard of orthodoxy, any council of the church would have a huge task in trying to convict you of heresy.

"The Lord bless and prosper you abundantly."

WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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ENDLESS BEING.

A friend has sent us a book with the above title, by the Rev. J. L. Barlow, requesting our opinion of the argument. The aim of the book is to defend the orthodox view of the endlessness of sinful being as against the inroads which are being made upon it by the advocates of final extinction. The author handles his theme with ability, and as one who formerly held the theory he now combats, proceeds to assail it along a new line. He concedes that the orthodox have no defence against this view, unless they correct their own terminology. So long as they use the terms "life" and "existence," "eternal life" and "immortality," as equivalents they grant to the conditionalists all that is needful for their premise. As eternal life is the gift of God alone through Jesus Christ, it is manifest that only those who receive Him attain to immortality, provided these are equivalent terms. He therefore draws a sharp distinction between life and mere existence, and differentiates immortality from eternal life by applying the term to the body. The Christian has now eternal life, and attains immortality when the mortal body puts on immortality. The author therefore goes with the conditionalists in denying that man is by nature immortal, or that he has an immortal soul—a

term foreign to Scripture—and predicates eternal life only of the saint, and immortality only of the saints when raised and glorified. But he argues that the wicked, who have neither of these, must continue to *exist* because only a being created to exist forever could have the capacity for this life and immortality, and because Scripture plainly declares that they are to be punished forever.

This book has been hailed as giving a final and unanswerable reply to such writers as White and Pettengill who have won over large numbers to the view that the everlasting punishment of the ungodly is to be everlasting destruction—a view which has strength enough to command the modified assent of such men as the Professor of Theology at Yale, Prebendary Row, and, by plain implication from "Natural Law in the Spiritual World," Prof. Henry Drummond.

To us, however, the argument of the book seems to turn upon a mere logomachy. All intelligent Bible readers admit that the terms life and existence do not always coincide—that "to be carnally minded is death"—that men now exist who have not "eternal life," and hence may continue to exist, and that immortal embodiment in God's image is the high prerogative only of His sons. But the question still recurs: Does the term death in Scripture imply no more than spiritual death? Granting that bodily death may be a mere result of a previous moral state of alienation from the life of God, is the threatened death of the soul simply the permanence and deepening degradation of the carnal mind? Is there such a thing as a real death—a cessation at least, if not the absolute extinction, of man's being? Does the threat

"the soul that sinneth it shall die" mean only that it must be forever carnally minded? Let us see how this accepted view will fit in to some well known passages.

"If Christ be not raised . . . . then they also which have fallen asleep in Christ are forever sunk in carnal-mindedness." (1 Cor. xv. 18.)

"What advantageth it me if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we become carnal-minded." (vs. 32).

Can we not properly say to all who attempt in this way to overlay and conceal the reality of death: "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it *die?*"

It is a mere trick of words then by which this author makes use of passages which speak of the accessories of death to do away with the idea of death itself. Death, he tells us, as well as life, "is a *condition* of existence, and existence is as necessary to death as it is to life" (page 143). Where then, we ask, would be the force of Paul's irony if it read thus: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we pass into another condition of existence."

It is this perversion of the idea of death which has lead to the belittling of the hope of resurrection, and the banishment of this essential feature of the gospel to its present obscure place in modern preaching. It has led to the substitution of a whole scheme of man-made eschatology in lieu of the one taught in the Word of God, of which the resurrection is the centre. It is assumed that man lives on after death before he is raised from the dead —that resurrection relates only to the body and that the soul cannot die, and that the wicked dead are raised only

for the purpose of increasing their sufferings by making the body a sharer in them. We are aware that most writers of the conditional immortality school have fallen into grave inconsistencies, because while correct about death, they did not understand the gospel of the resurrection. Mr. Barlow is quick to discern these inconsistencies and to make sharp use of them against his adversaries. But neither does he understand the place and meaning of resurrection in God's redemptive scheme. And hence, his blundering is even worse. It is bad enough to make the unjust dead to be brought back to life, in order that they may be again judged and then again destroyed—this time without remedy. But it is still worse to make their resurrection, which is confessedly the fruit of Christ's redemption, to be restoration in order to endless suffering. With such a perverted idea of the purpose of resurrection, no wonder that his idea of death has been perverted to match it.

JUDGMENT ON THE OLD MAN.

It is essential to the right understanding of Scripture that we receive its teachings concerning that form of manhood which in the New Testament is frequently denominated "the old man," the carnal or "natural" (psychical) man. This is the form in which man was first created. "Howbeit that which is first is natural." Adam was an earthy man (1 Cor. xv. 45–50). In the trial to which he was subjected he proved himself unworthy and incapable of administering that estate to which he was assigned, as made in the image of God and as His son. Therefore a new creation of man was provided for, which

should be a perfect and indestructible image of God. This is the "new man" of which the New Testament often speaks. This new man was begotten at the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is therefore called "The image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature, the first born from the dead" (Col. i. 15–18). The original thought of God in the creation of man, the archetype after the pattern of which the creature was to be formed and for whose unlimited possession it was designed, was then realized. This exaltation of the new man required the setting aside of the old. The old, however, was first to be tried, not only in Adam its first representative, but historically in the race descending from him. The experience of the race and of individuals in this trial on the earthly plane was to be their training for the higher nature and dignities of the heavenly manhood.

What we have now to notice specially is that the whole of this trial has been a record of God's judgment upon the old man. Upon Adam the sentence was first spoken "Thou shalt die." And upon the successive generations descending from him, and upon the proudest and strongest forms in which the human race has been organized, this same sentence has been passed. The old world perished in the flood. The empires of the past waxed old and vanished away. The Bible is filled with concrete examples of this primary principle of the divine dealings. Ishmael, the firstborn, the son of Abraham's strength, was set aside, and Isaac, type of man born after the spirit, became the heir. So we read "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated." The carcasses of the old generation of Israelites fell in the wilderness, and a new seed, which knew not

the vices of Egypt, inherited the land. The Old Testament is full of these allegories (Gal. iv. 22–31.)

When we come to the New Testament we find the axe at once laid at the root of the tree of the old and corrupt form of manhood. The first principle of the Messiah's teaching was "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit must be hewn down and cast into the fire." The whole stock of humanity had been long on trial. God's time was now ripe for the setting of it aside, and for the introduction of the new man, the Lord from heaven. Hence we find Jesus declaring to a "man of the Pharisees, a ruler of the Jews," "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh." Nothing higher can be produced from this source. "Except a man be born from above he cannot see the kingdom of God." All this kind of teaching was explained and illumined by the fact of His own resurrection from the dead. Even the holy Jesus must put off this vesture of the old man, the flesh and blood nature He had taken upon Himself for our redemption, and be made a quickening Spirit, with power to transform other sons of men into the fashion of His own new and immortal manhood.

We see therefore why the development of the Christian life in us must proceed in the way of a continual judgment upon the old man. Jesus most carefully impressed this upon His disciples when He warned them how much better it was to cut off an offending limb or pluck out an offending eye than that the whole body should be given over to destruction. For "the casting into hell" meant neither more nor less than this—the entire destruction of the old earthy manhood whose desires and ambitions are always clamoring to be indulged. He also taught that the volun-

tary surrender of these would anticipate and render unnecessary the afflictive judgments of God upon it. As St. Paul afterwards phrased the same truth, "If we would judge ourselves we should not be judged," (1 Cor. xi. 29-32). And here comes in the vital principle of salvation through resurrection, in that the death of the old man must precede life in the new. This is the first principle of the doctrine of Christ. A man must forsake himself and all that he hath, "hate his own life also," in order to be His disciple. He must, in the language of Paul, count himself as having died and risen with Christ. He is therefore to mortify or put to death his members which are upon the earth, to "put off the old man with his evil deeds," and to put on the new man. He is to become a new creation in Christ Jesus. All this requires the voluntary surrender to death of the old and evil human nature. And in this process we receive and grow up into the divine human nature of the new risen man which is Christ. The more the old man dies in us, the more is the new man raised up in power. And it is of the first importance to our spiritual progress that we shall recognize that the saving work of Christ is not to reform or amend or refine the old man, but to crucify him in order that the new man may be formed in us. This new wine cannot be put into old bottles. It is true that the old man is now a sort of calyx in which the germ of the new manhood is encased and nourished. But the new in its growth must burst and cast off the husk of the old. Chaff, most useful in its time and place, must in the end be cast away and burned.

This truth, so important in the practical life of the Christian, is necessary to him also as a key to the interpre-

tation of God's dealings with him and with the world. It explains all his disappointments and afflictions. It shows him how to avoid the necessity of such chastisements. A life in the spirit will so regulate and tone down into its proper place the life in the flesh that we shall not need the judgments by which our heavenly Father must needs humble it under His mighty hand.

And is not

THE MYSTERY OF RETRIBUTION

to be explained by this same principle? In the threatened casting into hell—in the judgment scene of Matthew xxv. where we see the inhumane and unrighteous of mankind cast into eternal fire for an everlasting punishment or cutting off (*Κολασιν*), what have we here but the same world-wide and world-long judgment of God upon the old or carnal man? And what greater mistake can be made than to suppose that these expressions presuppose the immortal existence of this kind of men? Is it not the whole trend and purpose of the divine judgments to make an end of the old man? Can the earthy and the carnal man be perpetuated forever? The whole question about future punishment narrows itself down to this point. Is such a creature possible under the plan and government of God as an immortal man sinning and suffering forever? Be it remembered that the common doctrine of eternal punishment presupposes the perpetual existence not merely of a "spirit of man," or of a "soul" but of a re-embodied and resurrected man. Thus the old, the carnal, the earthy man is conceived of as existing forever, whereas it lies at the very basis of the divine plan to destroy and make an end of him. There can be no place for him in the new system

when all things are made new. We are forced therefore to conclude that the class condemned under this universal judgment of God will either so learn righteousness in the fires of His destruction, that out of the death of the old man they shall emerge into newness of life, or else that, proving incorrigible, they shall be cut off from existence without remedy. The alternative of their endless existence in that character of human nature upon which God has pronounced the death sentence, and which has proved itself unworthy of eternal life and heritage in that system of which man was made the heir, is wholly inadmissible.

No man, therefore, is prepared to read the damnatory passages of the Bible, such as we have in Mark ix. 43–49, or in the judgment scenes of Matthew xxv. and Revelation xx., until he has grasped this great principle underlying all revelation: the old man, the mere man of nature who is under the dominion of the carnal mind, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, but must be handed over to destruction. The Christian must thus judge concerning the old man in him, and daily put him off, making no provision for the flesh. Our God, becomes thus to him a consuming fire. Either he must yield himself unto God to do this work in him, through the baptism with the Spirit and with fire, or it must be forced upon him through judgments, out of which he "shall be saved so as by fire." And so in these judgment scenes from which the dogma of an everlasting torment in hell has been drawn, we are to see simply this uniform universal judgment of God executed upon men in whom the Christ-life has not been formed, and brought forth good fruit. These branches of the great tree of humanity are cut down and cast into the

fire, not for an endless preservation there, but for an irrevocable destruction. But, as we have repeatedly shown concerning Matt. xxv. 31–46, that the judgment it describes is visited upon living nations, rather than upon dead men raised, we are left at perfect liberty to raise the question whether this end of these multitudes in this character in which they here appear as carnal men will not be followed by a resurrection to another opportunity in life, freed from the incubus of that original sin which inheres in this Adamic life, and which gives it from its birth such a fearful trend toward death.

WHAT IS NEEDED.

The great want of the Church in this age is a reasonable and Scriptural eschatology—one that she can faithfully and honestly preach, and one that will commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. What is needed in order to this is:

1. That the term "death" in Scripture shall be accepted in its obvious meaning. It often defines indeed a spiritual condition, but appropriately so because that condition ends in actual death, such as Paul speaks of when he says: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we *die.*"

2. That death shall be recognized as the threatened penalty of sin, and that the death-state, so long as it lasts and until interrupted by resurrection, is the sheol, or hell, of Scripture.

3. That beyond the death of the body the "soul," as distinct from spirit, may suffer torment and be destroyed in hell, thus completing the death process until the man

as such no longer exists, and his eviction out of the estate and heritage attached to life in manhood is complete.

4. That the possession of "spirit," which cannot be destroyed, supplies a basis for the reconstruction of man through a resurrection from the dead.

5. That as death is the loss of life, such resurrection is recovery to life, and is in all cases redemptive.

6. That where union with Christ is effected through faith, resurrection begins even here, insuring the rescue of the "soul" from the destruction above referred to, and the ultimate glorification of the whole man through the redemption of the body.

7. That no other class of men escape the death penalty for sin, although the intensity and duration of their banishment from the life-giving presence of the Lord will be in all cases "according to deeds done," and the measure and degree of emancipation into life through resurrection will be according to the same law—"To every seed his own body."

8. That "the resurrection of the just" is something entirely distinct from that of the justified in Christ Jesus, who are said to be quickened and risen with Him. The "just" are the upright and humane class found among all nations who in the main "do good," while the unjust "do ill." To the former there is promised the resurrection of life,—priority in time and order and degree of life, such as will make easy their entrance into life eternal; while the unjust shall come forth to such lower conditions of life as shall make their resurrection one of judgment, bringing with it restraint and bondage and corrective discipline according to desert.

9. That there are stages in the progress of resurrection. The spiritually quickened are said to be already "risen with Christ." Such quickened souls must be soon revived after bodily death, and must therefore be viewed as risen (Luke xx. 37, 38,) although the final glorification of their humanity may be completed at a future redemption of the body. But it is a mistake to limit the term resurrection to this final change alone.

10. The fiction of a long intermediate and probationary state between death and resurrection must be given up. It must be confessed that life after death is impossible, except in the way of resurrection from the dead.

11. The fiction, that the rewards and punishments for deeds done in this life are delayed to a last judgment day after a general resurrection, must be abandoned. It must be seen that the Christ entered upon His office as Judge of the world, both of the living and the dead, at His ascension and enthronement, and that before death and in death and the bondage in Sheol to which it introduces, men suffer under His mighty hand His just judgments for their sins. Especially must the false and degrading idea that resurrection is in order to retribution be forsaken. The death state is retribution, and it would continue unless some purpose of mercy or of further opportunity of trial required this deliverance from it.

12. It must be conceded, however, that this new trial in life may be given under such adverse circumstances by reason of previous hardening in sin as will render some men impervious to its blessings. Such as "have never forgiveness, neither in this world nor in the world to come," must incur "the second death," out of which there is no promise of a second resurrection.

13. The priestly place and calling of the Church, as the firstborn from the dead, must be recognized in this unfolding plan of God to bless all the families of the earth with a resurrection from the dead. It must be seen that they are a chosen seed through whom the blessings of this redemption are to reach the later born, and that to this end they are called now to suffer with Christ a baptism for the dead.

14. This idea of the church as a royal priesthood, chosen for the redemption of the race, must be grasped before she can realize what is her true constitution and basis of union, and before she can be properly qualified for her high functions. Her Lord will not put forth His power for the salvation of the world through the dissevered members of what should constitute one body.

LIFE'S SECRET.

God is dealing with us and all human souls in order to teach us one thing—that life apart from Him falls into disorder, and misery and death, and that only the life that flows on in harmony with Him, the source of it, grows strong, and blessed and enduring. The worries, the disappointments, the sorrows of life are sent because we are ever seeking to pursue our own ends and to do our own wills. Whereas, if we were content to surrender the management of our lives into God's hands, they would be pervaded by His peace which passeth all understanding. It is appall-

ing to contemplate into what depths of vice and wretchedness, of despondency and disease, the life may sink when God gives it up to be the prey of its own lawless impulses. Every morning's paper brings its record of crime, and suicide, and madness. But on the other hand it is a joy to think how the lives of men all around us are being subdued, and tranquilized, and enlivened, and blessed through the knowledge—attained often through suffering—that the springs of all true life and happiness are in God, and that the mission of Christ was to reconcile and unite us to Him in life everlasting. Where the soul has found out this secret and yields itself unto God, there the disordered powers and functions even of the body are healed and strengthened, the horizon of hope is cleared and widened, the common cares and duties of life become means of worship and of service, and the man already breathes the atmosphere of heaven.

GOD.

Professor Samuel Harris tells us that the Jesuits in the early missions to the Canadian Indians found that they already had some idea of God. In explaining to them that God punishes the wicked, the missionaries said: "When you capture your enemies you torture and burn them; God does the same to His enemies."

This is scarcely less revolting than the picture of God which is afforded by the most eminent Puritan theologian of the past century. Jonathan Edwards, in his famous sermon on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

"The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; His wrath towards you burns like fire; He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire; He is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in His sight; you are 10,000 times as abominable in His eyes as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended Him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince, and yet it is nothing but His hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment; it is ascribed to nothing else that you did not go to hell the last night; that you have been suffered to awake again in this world, after you have closed your eyes to sleep, and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose this morning but that God's hand has held you up; there is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God provoking His pure eyes by your sinful, wicked manner of attending His solemn worship; yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell."

These quotations, the reader will observe, agree in this that they represent justice as a permanent and enduring quality in God's character, and mercy as a temporary and restraining one—that in the words of an eminent theologian (Dr. Shedd), God *may* be merciful, but *must* be just. This conception underlies a great deal of scholastic theology. With this conception new theology makes a sharp issue. It believes that God is love; that His mercy endureth forever; that it is justice rather than mercy which is to be re-

garded as temporary. If this statement shocks the sensibilities of any conservative reader I will phrase it a little differently: "The Lord is great in mercy; He will not always chide, neither will He keep His anger forever."

GOD ETERNALLY MERCIFUL.

This, I suppose, is what is meant by the statement that new theology is Christological. It all centres around the belief that Jesus Christ is a manifestation of God; not of a part of God, not of certain attributes of God, not of a temporary disposition in God; but of God himself, in His fullness and entirety. That the sympathy of Him who wept at the grave of Lazarus, the compassion of Him who fed the hungry multitude, the forgiving kindness of Him who said to the abashed woman, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," are all reflections of God's eternal and immutable nature. And that, on the other hand, there is no wrath, or vengeance, or justice, or punitive attribute of any kind in the eternal Judge which was not in Christ. And that all mankind will stand at last to be judged by Him who knoweth our frame and remembereth that we are but dust; before Him whose wrath was never kindled against the ignorant or the outcast, but only against the hypocritical pretender, orthodox in doctrines, but grasping and unscrupulous in life; before Him who flung out against the pious false pretenders of His day, "Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell," and said to the woman taken in adultery, not even looking up into her blushing face, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." Any theology that takes this God out of the Bible and puts another in its place, which dethrones love and enthrones justice, manifesting itself in wrath and vengeance, is an un-

christian and anti-Christian theology; an ancient paganism lingering in churches from which Christian teaching has not expelled it.

THE TWO THEOLOGIES.

These two conceptions of God, the one centering about justice, the other about love, underlie a large part of modern theological discussion, even when the disputants are most unconscious of it. If God is universal love, then God's mercy knows no geographical boundary, His love no race limits. The Jew believed that God loved the Jew and cast out the Gentile; the Roman Catholic that He had mercy on the baptized and not on the unbaptized; the Calvinists that He had compassion on the elect, but held the non-elect to strict account. All these limitations of God's mercy the new theology not only repudiates without reserve, but condemns with unstinted indignation. God is the God of the whole race; of the Gentile as well as of the Jew, of the unbaptized as well as of the baptized, of the non-elect as well as of the elect, of the Pagan nation as well as of the Christian nation. His sun shines on the evil and on the good; His rain falls on the believer and on the heretic.

This is what the new theology means when it says, with somewhat ambiguous phrase, that the race is a redeemed race;—not that the work of redemption has been accomplished for all mankind, but that all mankind are included in the divine thought and purpose of redemption. As in a school the principal aims at the best results in character for all his pupils, though some by their obduracy shut themselves out from it, so God includes the whole human race in His will and purpose of mercy, though some may shut even God's mercy out from their hearts and

lives. As the divine mercy knows no limits in space so it knows no limits in time. It is eternal as it is illimitable. Mercy is no transitory and episodical quality, it is the eternal nature of God to be great in mercy; His mercy endureth forever.

FUTURE PROBATION.

It is this faith that underlies all that is vital in the so-called hypothesis of a future probation. The old theology men are right in insisting that this hypothesis has a profound significance in it. Much of the discussion about future probation has no such significance. But the whole question at issue, sometimes dimly seen, sometimes not seen at all, concerns the very nature of God. It is not whether all men have had a fair chance in this life, but rather whether God has had a fair chance. It is not whether it would be just for God to condemn men who have never heard of the Gospel, but rather whether God's mercy has found all the opportunity which infinite mercy can find to rescue the perishing and save the lost. One who stands on so narrow an island as this little world of ours, sea-begirt and fog-beclouded, may well hesitate to be dogmatic respecting anything that lies beyond the surf that thunders along the shore and the fog that curtains it. But he who really believes that God is love and Christ is a revelator of God's eternal nature, whatever else he may doubt, will not for an instant allow himself to doubt that no child of God will be left to the dominion of an eternal sin till every resource of wisdom and love has been exhausted in the endeavor to rescue him.

DR. LYMAN ABBOTT,
in Philadelphia *Press.*

EGYPT AND IMMORTALITY.

"It was the universal belief that, immediately after death, the soul descended into the lower world and was conducted into the Hall of Truth (or of the Two Truths), where it was judged in the presence of Osiris and the forty-two dæmons, the 'Lords of Truth' and judges of the dead. Anubis, the 'director of the weight,' brought forth a pair of scales, and, placing in one scale a figure or emblem of Truth, set in the other a vase containing the good actions of the deceased; Thoth standing by the while, with a tablet in his hand, whereon to record the result. According to the side on which the balance inclined, Osiris delivered sentence. If the good deeds preponderated, the blessed soul was allowed to enter the 'boat of the Sun,' and was conducted by good spirits to Aahlu (Elysium), to the 'pools of peace,' and the dwelling-place of Osiris. If, on the contrary, the good deeds were insufficient, if the ordeal was not passed, then the unhappy soul was sentenced, according to its deserts, to begin a round of transmigrations in the bodies of more or less unclean animals, the number, nature, and duration of the transmigrations depending on the degree of the deceased's demerits, and the consequent length and severity of the punishment which he deserved, or the purification which he required. Ultimately, after many trials, if purity was not attained, the wicked soul underwent a final sentence at the hands of Osiris, Judge of the Dead, and, being pronounced incurable, suffered complete and absolute annihilation" (Rawlinson's *History of Ancient Egypt*, i. 317).

Each of those who passed the ordeal—who had not

stolen, waylaid, smitten men privily, told falsehoods, killed the sacred beasts, corrupted men or women—received the name of Osiris, in addition to their birth name, and was addressed—

Hail to the Osiris N! Thou art pure.
Thy heart is pure. . . . .
Thou dost enter the Hall of the Two Goddesses of Truth.
Thou art purified of all sin, of all crime. . . . .
Thou, being very pure, dost enter the Lower Heaven.
The Two Goddesses of Justice have purified thee in the great Hall.
Thou dost enter the horizon with the Sun.
Thy soul is received in the bark Neshem, with Osiris.
Thy soul is divinized in the Hall of Seb.
Thou art justified for ever and ever. . . . .
Thine individuality is permanent. . . . .
Thou art divinized with the souls of the gods.
Thy heart is the heart of Ra.
Thy members are the members of the great god (Osiris).
Thou livest for ever and ever.

The gods who accompany Osiris address the Osiris N in these words—

Thou dost follow Ra.
Thou dost follow Osiris.
Thy soul liveth for ever and ever.

Many are the evil spirits, however, who desire to capture the justified Osiris N as he passes through their domains, but they are thus addressed—

Oh Strider, coming out of An,

The Osiris N hath not committed any sin.
Oh Mighty of the Moment, coming out of Kerau,
The Osiris N hath not done any evil.
Oh Nostril, coming out of Sesennu,
The Osiris N hath not been exacting.
Oh Devourer of the Eye, coming out of Kerti,
The Osiris N hath not obtained anything by theft.
Oh Impure of Visage, coming out of Rusta,
The Osiris N hath not been angry.
Oh Lion-Gods, coming forth from heaven,
The Osiris N hath not committed any sin by reason of hardness of heart.
Oh Fiery-Eyed, coming out of Sechem,
The Osiris N hath not been weak.
Oh ye gods who dwell in the Lower Heaven
Hearken unto the voice of Osiris N.
He is near unto you,
There is no fault in him,
No informer riseth up against him,
He liveth in the truth,
He doth nourish himself with truth,
The gods are satisfied with all that he hath done.
He hath given food to the hungry,
Drink to the thirsty,
Clothes to the naked,
He hath given the sacred food to the gods,
The funeral repasts to the pure spirits.
No complaint hath been made against him before any of the gods.
Let him enter (then) into the Lower Heaven
Without being repulsed.

Let him follow Osiris, with the gods of Kerti.
He is favored among the faithful,
(And) divinized among the perfected.
Let him live!
Let his soul live!

The wicked—those tried and found wanting—are thus addressed—

You are bound; you are tied by strong cords. I have ordained your detention. You will not free your arms again. Powerful is Ra against you; his soul is fortified against you. . . . . Your contempt for justice is upon you; the wickedness of your blasphemies is upon you. Bad for you is the judgment of my father. You are those who have done evil, who have committed crimes in the Great Hall; your bodies are destined to punishment, and your souls to annihilation. You will not see Ra any more in his forms as he passes into the retreat. Oh Ra! Praise be to Ra! Thy enemies are in the place of destruction. . . . . Fall! Never rise again! Be fascinated! Thou shalt never be found again. . . . . Fire issues from the retreat against thee. We have judged thee; perish! . . . . . You are bound behind, wicked ones! Ra will sacrifice you; you will be no longer in existence; your souls shall be destroyed. They shall live no longer on account of what you have done against my father Osiris. Powerful is the word of my father Osiris against you; powerful is my word against you. . . . . Oh, be no longer in existence—destroyed! . . . . Launch thy flame against the enemies of my father, burn their bodies, consume their souls. . . . . My children

are against them; they destroy their souls; those who have issued from me are against them; they exist no longer.

These extracts, as translated by our leading scholars from the Egyptian records, prove the statement already made that the ancient Egyptians believed not in the Immortality of the Soul, but in the Immortality of *some* souls; they also declare that the wicked who prove incorrigible will be literally and really destroyed, their souls will be consumed and perish for ever.—J. Mill in *The Messenger*.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

With reference to our reply in the last number that the use of past tenses in Acts ii. 29, 34, as may be seen in the new version, precludes the inference which is sometimes drawn that these verses teach that David was still sleeping among the dead, our friend replies again that the words "his sepulchre is with us unto this day" clearly imply that this was the apostle's meaning. Our rejoinder to this is that the whole address should be regarded as designed to prove this point, that the hope of a Messianic kingdom was not fulfilled in David's reign, but that the patriarch predicted that it would be fulfilled by one of his descendants, whom God would exalt to the true Messianic kingdom by raising him from the dead. Beyond this we are not required to go on to infer that David is still unconsciously awaiting resurrection. Even if he remained a captive in hades up to the time that our Lord arose, this would not prove that his condition has remained unchanged ever since that triumph. When He of right took the keys of death and hell, we believe that it was for the deliverance of them that were bound. According to our friend's view not only David, but all the saints

are still silently sleeping away the long ages that elapse before they will be raised. St. Paul would be still dead. Why then did he write thus in 2d Cor. v.? "For we know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For verily in this we groan, longing to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked .... Now he that wrought us for this very thing is God, who gave unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Being therefore always of good courage, and knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord, (for we walk by faith and not by sight); we are of good courage, I say, and are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord."

Our correspondent writes further:

Moreover can your supposed probability that multitudes of captives may have already been delivered since our Lord's ascent stand in face of that which is written in Job xiv. 14? "Man lieth down and riseth not till the heavens *wear out* (see Septuagint). They shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." That decay or wearing out of the *heavens* is intimately and often connected with our Lord's return as the Concordance will plainly shew, and it is expressly stated that "they that are Christ's" are raised at His *parousia.* That first statement concerning the resurrection which Scripture gives us is a very striking one and clear as to the long interval between man's lying down and rising again, and Nature in its symbols of a tree, and the wearing away and wasting of mountains, rivers, etc., after long, long periods is laid under tribute to present the idea. I *do not deny* that any have been raised yet since our Lord's ascension, but we have no proof of it, and these Scriptures are antagonistic at present to the view.

With respect to the passage from Job, and kindred passages in Ecclesiastes, we would ask, Does the doctrine of inspiration require us to believe that every statement made by Job, or either of his friends, has the divine sanction? If so, where is the ground for the divine rebukes afterwards administered? Upon the face of this book not even the best of these sages, Job, had all the facts in hand that bear upon the great problem. Job did not

know as much about this mystery of man's future as do we. In this book we have a perfect record of these men's thoughts—inspiration secures this—but we shall greatly mistake if we go back from Paul to Job or to Solomon to find out what awaits man beyond the grave. We are to "rightly divide" the word of truth.

Much more weight is to be attached to the argument that "they that are Christ's" are said to be raised at His coming. This brings up the question as to whether we are to regard the coming of Christ, to which He so often referred, as one definite event of the distant future, or as a continuous manifestation of a presence which was to take the place of His presence in the flesh, and which was especially to be felt at great epochs. That this presence will in the future become visible we infer from what Scripture teaches as to Christ's appearing. But it also teaches that that Presence is already here. And, comparing Scripture with Scripture, we infer that saints like Paul have already been raised into the light and life which it imparts. That their resurrection may not yet be completed, that there is another stage to be reached in their triumph over death before their humanity is fully glorified, is probable. But that resurrection begins in the child of God when he is born again is a plain truth of Scripture; that their souls pass safely through the crisis of death is also taught, as is also the blessed fact that they are safely housed—at home with the Lord. All this is resurrection. We accept all these brethren have to say about resurrection as the only hope of a future life. We reject with them the idea of a ghostly intermediate state which is neither death nor life. We believe that the dead in Christ are to live again only through their resurrection from the dead. But we recall joyfully the word of Jesus, "*I am* the resurrection and the life; he that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die." We remember also St. Paul's frequent word, "Ye are risen with Christ." And therefore we cannot think of His loved ones as still unconscious, awaiting to be summoned from the long sleep of death. Their spirits are quickened (Eph. ii. 1–6), their souls are saved from death (Matt. xvi. 25, 26; James

v. 20), they are in-homed in a house of the Lord's own building (II. Cor. v. 1–8), and therefore, even though the full glorification of their bodies awaits some great crisis in creation (Rom. viii. 19–23), still we must affirm with all confidence that they are now risen from the dead.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

JOHN WARD, PREACHER—At a recent meeting of the Presbyterian Ministerial Association of this city, the Rev. J. Henry Sharpe, D. D., read a paper upon this theological novel, the object of which was to defend the Presbyterian Church and ministry against the harsh view of eternal punishment it imputes to them. He said:

"We must take exception to the theory imputed to the pulpit and the people in the story as to the form of the doctrine in vogue among them. They are made to construe the figurative language of Scripture literally and believe in hell as a burning lake of material fire and flame. Just this is set forth as the accepted view in the 'Lock Haven Church.' In prayer an elder is made to picture the souls of the damned as 'writhing in sulphurous flame.' Among the obtrusively multitudinous references to hell it is explicitedly stated by a sympathetic mentor of Mrs. Ward, that it is not so much the doctrine itself as the mode of the doctrine that is at fault."

"We believe in eternal punishment, because He revealed it to be true, but if He had withheld such a revelation it would in no wise have invalidated the necessity or value of His atonement, and the absence of belief in it would not have invalidated the personal salvation of the believer. Disbelief in the Lord Jesus Christ is the sole damnatory sin of the Gospel and of the Confession of Faith." The speaker declared that the Presbyterian Church was not open to the charge of doctrinal intolerance so often imputed to it. "Even if the wife of a pastor were known to be heterodox on the point of eternal punishment," he said, "she would not thereby expose herself to discipline unless she sought to pervert others. Her acceptance or denial of the dogma would not be decisive evidence one way or the other as to whether she were a child of God."

This may be all true enough of the present attitude of the Presbyterian Church: but how about its Confession? Is not John Ward a more faithful exponent of it than the average Presbyterian preacher of to-day? If the framers of that Confession did not believe in a hell of material fire why did they put such language into it as this: "Who shall be punished with most grievous and unspeakable torments of body and soul, without intermission, with the devil and his angels in hell fire forever." It would be easy to quote from the sermons of Jonathan Edwards, and other divines of less than a hundred years ago, views of hell and future punishment as dark and forbidding as anything attributed in this book to John Ward. The truth about the matter is that a surface acceptance of our Lord's words about eternal punishment requires us to believe that the wicked are consigned to everlasting fire. We are reduced therefore to this dilemma. We must either stand by the Westminster statement as absolutely true to Scripture, or we must interpret the language as modified by other teachings of Scripture. These require us first, to regard "eternal fire" as a concrete expression for those destructive forces of nature which break down and consume the bodies of men in death and destroy their souls in hell; and second, we must regard this threatened penalty as limited by the great redemption promise to recover all mankind to another life beyond this pit of death and hell. On the one hand, we see "all the nations" standing before the Son of Man, and a large portion of them consigned to eternal fire. On the other, we have the great foundation promises that in this same Son of Man "all the nations of the earth shall be blessed." If the generations of mankind, dead and living, outside of the elect people in the line of which the promised seed was to come, are not included in the "all," then, indeed, is the promise of the God of our salvation made nugatory. The only reconciling principle in the case is that of redemption through resurrection. This unlocks the mystery and solves all difficulties. Resurrection does not precede the jndgment to eternal fire, but recovers from it.

Dr. Sharp's ingenious apology cannot, therefore, rescue the Presbyterian church from her false position in persistently adhering to statements in her confession which, if true, ought to make every one of her ministers a John Ward, and at the same time paring down these statements from her pulpits and before the public under the plea that they are only accepted for "substance of doctrine." And as to the tolerance in her position, we can only say that in the only instance in her history in which one of her ministers made an effort to have her revise these formulas, at the same time proposing this principle concerning resurrection as the true guide to such revision, we were gracefully invited to step down and out as a disturber of her peace.

One other statement in Dr. Sharpe's paper, as published at length in the *Presbyterian*, deserves notice. He says: "Character tends to final permanence. The sinner is punished eternally because the sinner sins eternally. Sin is punished no longer than sin endures." This apologetic way of putting the doctrine of eternal punishment is a very common one, but if Dr. Sharpe will read over again his creed upon this point, he will see that it plainly states that the wicked are consigned to the unspeakable torments of an endless hell-fire for the misdeeds of this life. Moreover, here again the Confession is true to the surface reading of its main proof-text, Matt. xxv. 31–46. The sentence of the Judge is for inhumanity during this present earthly state. It is uncandid, therefore, to seek to escape the surface meaning of the words in this way. The honest way is either to receive them in their full and proper sense, as the framers of the Confession did, or to throw upon them the light of other principles of Scripture concerning the character and purposes of God, and especially of that prime principle of His redemption plan by which the sentence to death and hell of man for sin is not suffered to make an end of him, inasmuch as beyond it there has been provided a resurrection of the dead. There is no door of hope out of the dungeon of the dogma in which John Ward's soul was immured, but in this principle of the redemptive character of resurrection.

CHURCH UNION IN JAPAN.—The Rev. Wm. Imbrie, D. D., the honored son of an honored father, writes from Japan as follows to *The Presbyterian* about the proposed union between the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in Japan.

This is the day of the founding of the Church of Christ in this nation; Christianity stands where Paul stood when he entered Macedonia. It is then no time for a Paul party and an Apollos party. The differences between Presbyterians and Congregationalists may be relatively important, but there are times and places when even the really important becomes only the trivial in comparison with the essential. It was Christ's own command, "Go ye and baptize," and yet a day came when Paul dared even to say, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel."

To this no doubt there is a ready reply. Presbyterians and Congregationalists may differ and may remain separate, but they need never be rivals. This is a delusion both in fact and in logic. In fact, the rivalry has begun; in logic, it must go on. If, in the face of Buddhism, the differences between these churches are enough to keep them separate, they are of enough importance to be emphasized and propagated, and that is but another name for rivalry. But if the differences are not enough to be proclaimed and propagated, then they are not enough to perpetuate for years to come a division in the Church of Christ.

Moreover, in deciding this question of Church union in foreign lands, the resources of the Churches, both at home and abroad, cannot be ignored. To-day the churches in America are with difficulty responding to the calls that come to them for the establishment of Christianity in Asia and Africa and the islands of the sea. Of all things, then, it is a time for the wise expenditure of forces. To-morrow in Japan foreign missions will have become home missions, and to adopt a policy that will make a Presbyterian church and a Congregational church eventually inevitable in every town throughout the empire is surely only folly.

We are glad to see this plain testimony from the field to the importance of united effort by the church in her foreign missionary work. We should have been more glad if Dr. Imbrie had placed the duty of union on the higher ground of the church's obligation to obey her Lord. His testimony, too, is

very important to the fact that separate sections in the church, whether at home or abroad, necessarily become rivals. It is idle to talk about the ability of denominations to exorcise the spirit of rivalry. They would cease to exist without it. Dr. Imbrie justly characterizes the prevalent idea of denominations as only different regiments in the Lord's army, under one leader, as a "delusion both in fact and in logic." This has always been the ground taken in this magazine. If this policy weakens and endangers Christianity abroad it can do so none the less at home. Still more, if Dr. Imbrie's condemnation of it applies to these two divisions in the Lord's host, it applies to all. Christians of every name in Japan should be aroused to the sin and folly of division, and give their Lord no rest until He show them some way by which some suitable fulfilment of His last prayer in their behalf may be found "that they all may be one." This would not require perfect agreement at all points of doctrine or of polity. But it does require an organism in which these differences should no longer embody themselves in rival organizations, but harmonize themselves within the limits, and under the law of the life of the one body. That life would show amazing strength in adjusting and assimilating these differences if we would only give it a chance. But it cannot and it will not condescend to act in power among these severed members of the one body. We quench the Spirit and cripple His energy by our unholy divisions. It is evident therefore that the Church is not to wait until her warring factions see eye to eye before she seeks to combine them into one. She must recognize that they have been made one by the very law of their common life in Christ, and that they must come together in Him so that His energy may operate among them to quell their differences and to lift them into that larger illumination in which they will be able to see eye to eye. Horace Greely used to say that "the way to resume specie payments is to resume." So the way for the church to bring about union is to obey her Lord and unite, and then trust Him to heal her divisions and dissipate the ignorance and sin in which they have their origin.

CREED REVISION.—*The Independent* says: "Creed revision is said to be slowly gaining ground in the Free Church of Scotland. Mr. Taylor Innes, in an article on the subject, says:

'In the Free Church not a single month has passed during the last fifteen years without a step of progressive education in this matter. No internal question has been raised, no Church movement of any kind has come into existence, without suggesting that the hands which may have to deal with it should be clean, and that for a Protestant Church to hold the truth persistently unrevised is to hold the truth in unrighteousness.'

"He maps out the work for the years to come under the following heads: '(1) There are several forms of creed revision, each of which has now a right to be carefully considered. (2) They ought to be brought before the presbyteries in the ordinary constitutional way. (3) There ought to be no delay, and no haste, henceforward in this recognized duty of the Church.' He does not indicate which of the several remedies proposed he favors. 'If it be true that the conscientious objections to the present Confession are not only numerous but of very different kinds, then one of these has no right to request the other to stand by till it is dealt with.' But regular revision of creed in some form is, he quotes Principal Rainey to prove, one of the 'ordinary and recognized responsibilities' of a Presbyterian Church, and he thinks the matter should be started without a 'fortnight's delay.'"

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

From a lady in Maryland:

"A friend sent me quite recently the December number of your magazine. The first interpretation of God's Word upon this point that came to me with the power of conviction of its truth was contained in the pages of Archdeacon Farrar's 'Eternal Hope.' The next was found in a book published in 1867, and referred to by him. It is 'The Restitution of All Things,' by Andrew Jukes, and now the same note is again sounded in your precious 'WORDS OF RECONCILIATION,' in which

I find especial reason for thanksgiving in the explicit language of your teaching concerning the 'future reward of the just.'

"May God bless and prosper you in the course you and these other brave, strong men have decided to pursue, in the effort to break the cruel chains that have so long held men in bondage to the fear of death."

"Well may we bless the Lord that he has raised up such men to prophesy again to suffering humanity and thus to answer the agonized cry for help of the million hearts made desolate with each passing moment.

"The almost total absence, of allusion even, to the Resurrection in the teachings of our pulpits, has always been an amazement and a grief to me, feeling sure as I have always been that it was this new life and immortality which Christ had brought to light that had caused the miraculous growth of the early church."

"The glorious fullness of the hope I now have has come to me now in my hour of sorest need, and as I know that when I prayed my Father for bread He would not give me a stone to kill, or instead of fish, a *serpent* to *deceive*; so I know that this comfort He has sent me is His own truth, and good for food for the hungering heart. I rejoice, therefore, that this truth should be disseminated, and I think that by the means you have chosen it will be more generally spread than by any other.

"I cannot but hope that in this new proclamation of 'peace and goodwill to men' we may descry the faint dawning of that glorious day I have ever longed to behold, when the 'Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout.'

"No minister of our own church, of which I have been a member for more than thirty years, seems ever to have had a conception of the truths you are now promulgating, as I know from bitter experience, when at different times I have sought comfort at their hands—though they were loving Christian men, and would gladly have soothed my sorrow if only they had known how.

"Pardon me for this trespass upon your valuable time, but I wanted to express my sympathy with your work.'

"I enclose a check for $3.50 and beg you to forward to my address books and magazine according to the 'special notice' on the back of the December number."

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WORDS OF RECONCI

VOL. V.] APRIL, 1889.

WHEAT AND CHAFF

The problem of retribution, and the i
the New Testament passages which bear u
very much simplified by a clear conceptio
anic office as it was set forth at the outset
ner, John the Baptist. In Matthew iii,
his words:

And now also the axe is laid at the ro
therefore every tree which bringeth not fo
hewn down and cast into the fire. I ind
with water unto repentance: but He that
is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not
He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghos
whose fan is in His hand, and He will th
His floor, and gather His wheat into the
will burn up the chaff with unquenchable

This statement fixes first the meaning
"unquenchable fire." It disposes of the
ence, that our Lord in Mark ix and elsev
teach the everlasting torment of those who
that he spoke of its fire as unquenchable.
with the fixed usage of the phrase by the
prophets, the Baptist declares the purpose
for purgation and riddance. The chaff w

up. The same thing is taught in the parable of the wheat and the tares (xiii, 30), "Gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." The tares are afterwards interpreted to be "the children of the evil one." And although there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth in the furnace where they are burned, there is nothing in the parable to teach that it shall go on forever. For evidently the object is, as in the case of the chaff, to make an end of the tares. The words are "Cast them into the fire and *burn* them."

Unquenchable fire, therefore, is the concrete expression for those consuming agencies which God employs in the execution of His judgments, whose energy man cannot arrest or avert, and which burn on inexorably until their purpose of destruction is accomplished.

But what is the chaff? Plainly, we may say, it is the whole of the evil which is wrought into the fabric of human lives or of nations. But this evil is not something merely external. It goes down as Jesus teaches into "the heart of man" (Matt. xv. 19), who therefore needs a new birth. As this teaching was afterwards more fully unfolded by His Spirit through the Apostles, the old man in us must be given over to judgment and death in order that the new man, which is Christ, may be formed in us. Chaff, then, in its deepest sense is this outward husk of the old man. It is not merely certain evil propensities and practices in this flesh and blood nature which we derive from Adam; it is the whole thing. Flesh and blood, the earthy man, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. It is chaff for the final burning. This does not imply that no useful nor sacred

purpose has been subserved by it. Chaff is a most necessary thing in its place. It is the husk which protects the wheat, and in which it is nurtured and matured. We are not to despise the present body, but we are to put a just estimate upon it as but the outward man that perisheth, while the inward man is renewed.

It is easy from this point of view to understand why the passages in which Jesus warns against the unquenchable fire were uniformly addressed to His disciples. Strangely and persistently these passages, such as Mark ix. 43–49, etc., are read and preached upon as if they were spoken to the promiscous hearers who often thronged about Him, and as if they were especially designed for the class we call sinners. The fact is that uniformly they were private instructions to disciples. Even the memorable passage (Matt. xxv. 31–46) which, more than any other, gives shape to our eschatology, was privately spoken to but a few of the disciples. These passages all teach the inevitable doom that awaits the old man in his inhumanity and selfishness. In Mark ix. the disciples had been disputing who should be greatest. The Lord teaches them that all self-seeking was but the indulgence of this old sinful human nature which must be mortified, or put to death, in order that they might live forever in the new life. "It is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." The first principle of His doctrine is that, by the voluntary handing over to judgment and death of these "members which are upon the earth," we save the life of both soul and body. We lose life to find it. We surrender the old human life and

refuse its demands, in order that we may recover a renewed human life in Christ. Even the death of the mortal body, which seems to be the necessary completion of the process by which "the body of sin is destroyed," is in order to our rising again in an immortal body. "As we have borne the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

This is God's great harvest law of life. The chaff must be separated and destroyed in order that the wheat may be gathered into His garner. For "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

This is the truth which *disciples* must first learn. They are taught, not that God out of Christ, but that *our* God is a consuming fire. And if Christians had fully realized the meaning of this great law as applicable to them, they would never have fallen into the fearful blunders they have made in their interpretations of what God purposes to do with sinners—blunders which distort and malign His character and conceal from mankind His fatherhood and grace. All these passages, including even the consignment of the inhuman and unloving part of mankind to the eternal fire, fall under one category. They set forth the Messiah's work of sifting out the wheat and burning up the chaff, whether that chaff be the unmortified members of sin in His own disciples, the whole body of sin in those who are not disciples, or the ungodly among "the nations." And in every case alike the end of this chaff is to be burned: but that this end is not destructive of the personal being of these multitudes is proved from the fact that they are to be raised from the dead. Something survives the

unquenchable fire, which is invested again with embodied life with its opportunities and risks. When we once see that all these words about consignment to fire relate to the threshing floor of this present world and to the men living upon it, and not to the resurrected men of a world to come, all is made plain. The world to come has its own judgment day. The "lake of fire" of Revelation xx. seems to symbolize a final and still more radical purgation by which all things are to be made new, as following the Messiah's administration over the realms of the dead. But in Mark ix. and Matthew xxv, it is the *living* generations of men who are sorted and separated either to the fire or the garner. And that is but a one-sided view of this judgment process which sees in it only retribution, and will not admit that there is anything to be saved out of this mass of chaff consigned to the fire. If there were nothing worth saving there would be no resurrection of these countless dead. It is the gospel of the resurrection which alone sheds light upon this dark mystery, by showing us how this stern Messiah, who consigns to quenchless fire, is also the life-giving Spirit in whom all these dead sons of Adam are—every man in his own order—to be made alive. It is the same mystery which the Lord long before had put among the "secret things" stored in that pregnant passage—the song of Moses—recorded in Deuteronomy xxxii. While the fire of His anger must burn to the lowest hell against sinful Israel and against all His enemies (v. 22), He yet declares that He will reckon with the invisible enemies who had brought this ruin upon them. And that this recompense would require the resurrection out of death and hell of those whom He was compelled to destroy

appears in His triumphant assertion, "I kill, and I make alive, I wound, and I heal. . . . Rejoice, O ye nations, with His people: For He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will make expiation for His land and for His people."

THE COMING REVOLUTION.

Allusion is made, on another page, to the remark of a prominent Congregational pastor, to the effect that theology is now on the eve of one of the greatest changes through which it has passed since the dawn of Christianity. The influences preparing for this change have been long at work, and it is already in progress. The new science has revolutionized the old conception of the universe and compelled a new interpretation of the Bible story of creation. It has more recently compelled a new reading of the narrative of the creation and fall of man. If evolution be true, and the best of even Christian scientists accept some phase of the doctrine, then the old covenant theology, based upon the theory of man's primeval perfection and fall from this high estate, must either widen its limits to admit this new truth, or else become defunct. It is surprising how much this covenant of works theory has to read into the Scripture narrative before it can read itself out of it. And soteriology will have to adjust itself to the new anthropology. The doctrine of the ransom of the human race by a Divine Redeemer can never be given up without giving up Christianity. But it will be seen that this ransom was not something paid for the propitiation of an offended God, but the voluntary surrender of this

Adamic type of human life to death, by One who could not be holden of death, in obedience to that universal law of being and of progress which requires that all defective forms of created life must perish from before Him, in order to prepare the way for that perfect and abiding form which cannot perish. We know how impossible it is to include in any definition every aspect of the manifold wisdom of God of which Christ is the expression; but some way of stating the doctrine of atonement must be found which shall harmonize it with God's great law of progress in created life, and which shall show that it was not a mere device to bridge over an emergency in moral government, but a provision by which humanity, under bondage to sin and death, might pass through death out into that region of larger life and creaturehood to which man was appointed from the beginning, and to achieve which Christ became the Lamb of sacrifice, ordained from the foundation of the world. From this point of view the Captain of our salvation not only redeemed humanity from sin and death, and us who are partakers of it, but was Himself made perfect through sufferings. That is, the perfectly fashioned human nature—the true image of the invisible God and the inheritor of His estate—was attained by Him through the voluntary surrender to death of the old and the imperfect. And this achievement He wrought not for Himself alone, but as our Captain—the new Head of humanity, and the Head and Source of this higher form of manhood to us. And our reconciliation to God comes not merely through faith in His sacrifice as a satisfaction to God's righteousness, but through faith in that achievement by which He redeemed the life of humanity from destruction,

and exalted it to the throne of God, and made us partakers with Him in its triumph. It is by no legal fiction that men are justified, but by being made partakers of that life which has won for itself in the Person of our High Priest the right to live forever in the presence of God.

But this law of progress in the type of humanity until its final destiny is reached, and for which progress the atonement clears the way, requires a revolution in the old eschatology. This was based on the old idea of God as a Sovereign Judge, rather than a beneficent Creator. Theology has never properly appreciated the grace and wisdom of God in His provision to redeem the human race from death to another life beyond it. It has assumed that man can never die. Hence it has yet to learn the full meaning of the primary fact of all Christianity—the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and of the splendid prospect for the race contained in the fact that in Him all shall be made alive. By a strange fatuity it has fixed the consignment of sinful men to hell after their resurrection, and has stripped this merciful provision to raise the dead of every redemptive feature, except in the case of the elect. It has misread those paragraphs from our Saviour's preaching which set forth the doom of the old and evil type of humanity, as if nothing new could ever spring out of the grave of fire in which it must be buried. Hence it has been blind to this great law of progress and renovation of which the resurrection is a supreme expression. Resurrection for the mass of mankind, in its view, opens no door of progress, but forever closes it. Now against all this the awakening mind of the church is sure to rebel. It will be seen that the true opportunity of life for most

men will not begin, until after they have died out of the animalism and ignoranee and sin of their present human life, and the whole body of it has been given over to the eternal fire, and until they are invested with another life beyond it. The Christian's opportunity is here, because he is already quickened out of this death in trespasses and sins, and stands through union with His Lord on the further shore of this sea of destruction. Those who reject Him must go down beneath its waves. And all the low and evil types of humanity with which the world is full must be given over to this burning. But the very object of the resurrection of Jesus was to set up a standard of eternal hope on the other side of this sea. He rose and revived that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. Resurrection shows that God has not finished yet with all these creatures of His hand. The trial of this life has not settled forever their everlasting destiny. It has only proved that they could not escape death nor win the crown of life upon this arena. To human sight they are gone forever; but not in the sight of Him who quickeneth the dead and calleth things that be not as though they were. His vast designs in creation, and in the human race as the destined lords of it, are not yet completed, nor are the treasures of His wisdom and boundless love exhausted. Whether He means to finally bring to eternal life and glory every possessor of the human nature may well be questioned. In every department of His working there appears to be some waste, rejected because of unfitness. Unworthy types of humanity may be suffered to drop out of personal being in this process by which He is preparing the vessels for His eternal praise. But we shall greatly

err and misconceive the very foundation truth of His Gospel, if we imagine that resurrection arrests the development of His great processes of life and creation. It is the only way in which they can find scope. And therefore the whole posture of the Creator and Sovereign of mankind, as defined in the old eschatology, must be displaced by one which sets forth His fatherhood and His benevolent working in creation and redemption along the ages to conduct His creatures, even through seas of fire, to that high estate in life and purity which shall make them fit vehicles of His glory and possessors of His unlimited estate. In brief, theology has yet to learn from God's law of resurrection, that the creative process in man is not yet complete, and therefore that the period of his moral discipline is not yet finished. Man is not a finished being, and therefore he is not, unless quickened in Christ, capable of that decisive trial by which it is assumed every man's eternal destiny is now fixed. Out of the very valley of Achor in which he and all his spoil are given over to be burnt, resurrection opens for him a door of hope.

Still further, a great change is impending in the view that has prevailed concerning the relation of the Church to this great plan of God. She is an election, but the gracious purpose in her choice does not terminate upon herself. She is not to be safely housed in heaven to sing God's praises while all the rest of mankind are left to curse Him out of the agonies of an eternal hell. She is only "the first fruits of God's creatures," "the first born from the dead," the "Church of the first born" whose names are written in heaven. Firstborn implies laterborn, first fruits a future harvest. And so she is now called to that priestly place

in which, both in this world and the world to come, she may take part with Christ in those administrations of power and grace by which her captive brethren of the human race shall be rescued from death, and given the opportunity of eternal life through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ. The old selfish view of salvation will be given up as Christians come to see these higher views of the hope of their calling, and as they come out into the light of these widening purposes of God toward the whole family of man. And at the same time they will come under the power of a much higher motive for personal fidelity and devotion to the service of Him who hath made them to be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood to show forth the praises of Him who hath called them from darkness to light." And the motive for the immediate salvation of their fellow men and of the heathen will in no way be diminished, when they come to see, that it is only through the gathering of this chosen seed out of every nation and kindred and tongue, that God's great promise of blessing to all the kindreds of the earth, both dead and living, can be fulfilled.

VIEWS OF THE REV. S. H. KELLOGG, D. D.

The Rev. Dr. Kellogg of Toronto has kindly sent us a reprint of an article furnished by him a year ago to the *Bibliotheca Sacra* on the doctrinal bearings of Premillenialism. We accept the leading principal of that system, which is that the Scriptures uniformly connect the universal triumph of the kingdom of God on earth with the Lord's coming. As to the time, the nature, and the mode

of His parousia we have come to hold a doctrine which is virtually a reconciliation between the two systems. The postmillenial system virtually killed in the Church the hope of the Lord's coming by postponing it to a distant judgment day, at least a thousand years after the world's conversion. The other system, in restoring the hope of His coming to its true place, has so fixed its gaze upon the future manifestation of it as to overlook the fact that it is already here behind the veil. Both the parousia of Christ and His judgment of the world began when God exalted Him to the right hand of power. His kingdom is now an existing fact. But it is administered from behind the clouds. The clouds are hereafter to be rent and His glory is to revealed. But the Presence that then will be made manifest is already here, only concealed. And the more fully the church comes to realize that that Presence is now in her, and active in the world around her, the sooner will the thin veil that now conceals it be rent.

It was not, however, for the purpose of discussing Premillenialism that we now refer to Dr. Kellogg's article; we wish merely to refer to his presentation of one of its doctrinal bearings. It was through that system that we first learned, with Dr. Kellogg, that there are ages to come in the administration of God's great redemptive scheme, and that the old Calvinistic theology had narrowed its vision down to one. Dr. Kellogg discusses this matter as follows:

"But while we describe premillennialism as logically Augustinian, it is, on the other hand, broader than the common Calvinism, in that it makes the term "election," or "the church," as used in the New Testament, to have a

(technical) reference only to the saved out of the present age, and denies that the salvation of this "election" in the present dispensation exhausts the revealed purpose of God in redemption. For, while it maintains, no less strenuously than the old Calvinism, that we must give full force to the elective and particularistic element in the New Testament representations of the divine purpose in redemption as very precious truth, it also insists that, in some way, place shall also be given to the no less explicit universalistic statements of the holy word. To these very many, even among Augustinians, have felt that many theologians have not always been inclined to do full justice; or, if they have sought to do so, it has been, as in the case of the theologians of Saumur, at the expense of logical consistency, and an unintended derogation from the divine glory.

It would thus appear that premillennialism may be regarded as the result of an attempt to give full and equal recognition to both these elements in revelation, and exhibit their true relation to each other. The premillennialist, if we understand their position aright, believes that he discovers that relation in what he understands to be the Scripture teaching that the particular election from the present dispensation, is not, as other schools of theology have taught, the ultimate end of redemption, but a means to a more comprehensive end, and that universalistic; namely, a "restoration of all things"—*i. e.*, the human race on the earth, and therewith the material creation—to more than pristine perfection and glory. In other words, what the Scripture terms the "election" has reference to the present dispensation; its universal statements look beyond the present to the dispensation of the kingdom which is coming. And thus evangelical premillennialists believe that full force may be allowed to both classes of statements, without, on the other hand, going the length of restorationists like, *e. g.*, Mr. Jukes, who make the election from the present age the intended means to the sal-

vation, in the ages to come, of every individual sinful being.

It will be further observed, that if this premillennialist scheme be established as scriptural, it fully meets and nullifies not only this objection against Calvinism as dealing unfairly with the universalistic element in Scripture, but also the common practical objection, that making, as it does, the salvation of a certain number of elect persons the total object, as regards sinful men, of Christ's redemption, it tends to beget in a certain class of minds a pious selfishness, preoccupying the mind with the question of personal salvation in a degree disproportioned to the yet vaster interests included in redemption. It is a great principle, admitted by all Christians, that where there is an election, it is always that those chosen may in their turn become the means of blessing to others; in the premillennialist system, this principle takes a place essential and fundamental."

Now while all this is true and ably presented, it yet, if true, requires us to go further. Dr. Kellogg's scheme answers very well to the purposes of God in reference to the human race of the future. But how about the human race of the past? How about the countless dead? Are they no part of "all the families of the earth," to whom blessing was promised through a chosen seed? Have these "universalistic statements of the Scripture" no reference to them? Have the numberless generations "who died without the sight" been snatched away forever from under the hand of this God of power and of grace? If Dr. Kellogg will reflect, he will see that this whole redemption plan turns upon a triumph over death, which was to unlock blessings for the dead. The sinful dead of Israel, of the nations with whom they had been brought in contact, the "children of death" of all nations were to be brought

back again from their captivity. To deny this is to deny that the dead are under God's eye and hand, as are the living. It is to make death the victor over Him. It is to diminish the lustre, and even to misconceive the meaning of our Lord's great triumph over death. After all, the gates of hades prove too strong for Him. The myriad sons of Adam are forever fettered behind its gloomy portals. We entreat Dr. Kellogg to be consistent, and to let the light of our Lord's triumph illumine for him the past history of the human race as well as its future. We shall gain nothing for the honor of His name by such a glowing vision of the future which leaves the past a scene of defeat and of blank despair.

Dr. Kellogg belongs to that numerous class of enlightened men in the orthodox churches who have been led to see that there are wider horizons of hope for the human race than their creed-systems have imagined, but who, from their dread of future probationism, are unwilling to admit that any light from that hope can ever reach the dead who sat in darkness all their lives and went down into the deeper darkness of sheol. Are such aware that in denying this, they are stripping our Lord's triumph of its highest trophies, and turning His gospel of glad tidings of great joy into a message of despair to more than half the race? If these brethren could see that these dead have had no trial for life, except the one in which they were condemned and lost it in Adam, and that they have been redeemed from death in order that they may have a probation, their dread of a "second" probation, which is not a second, would disappear. By all means let us not, for fear that men will abuse the grace of God, take upon ourselves

this discipline of law as a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. But the normal Christian is given liberty to do as the responsibility of robbing His gospel of half its grace and of tarnishing the glory of that victory over death which it is its first mission to proclaim. If God has seen fit to provide this gospel, we can afford to risk its results with men.

SALVATION AND MORALITY.

To a friend inquiring our general view as to the relation between morality and salvation, we have replied as follows:

1. The Bible teaches that for all men there is provided a life after death.

2. It does not, however, teach or assume the necessary endlessness of man's being. On the contrary, it represents eternal life and immortality as something provided by God, and as requiring a certain fitness in man before it can be received.

3. It teaches that the essential condition of this endless life is harmony with God. The "pure in heart" see Him.

4. It asserts that this inward purity can be attained only as the result of an inward change wrought by the Divine Spirit. "Ye must be born again."

5. This change must issue in the formation of perfect moral character in those in whom it is wrought. Such must in the end come to love God with all their heart, and their neighbors as themselves.

6. This alone is ultimate and absolute salvation—the union in life of man with God.

7. It teaches that the only path by which any man can reach this high goal is through a death out of the old nature and a resurrection from the dead, and that death unto self, and new life unto God begin now in those who receive Christ. Such, in dying, virtually escape death.

8. It asserts, however, that for all other men, who must suffer the penalty of death and its consequent exclusion from the life-giving presence of the Lord, there is provided, each in his own order, a resurrection from the dead.

9. As to how far this resurrection will be an emancipation from the evil conditions of the former life, and open up the path to immortality, depends upon the deeds done in this life. They that have done good come forth unto "the resurrection of life;" they that have done ill to "the resurrection of judgment;" that is, to one which keeps them still under restraint and discipline.

It thus appears that in all cases morality, or purity of heart, is the condition of blessedness. The saved in this life are those who receive Christ into their hearts to work that change which shall make them good and true and pure. The saved in the life to come can enter into life by no other path. The resurrection will make more or less sure their entrance upon it "according to that they have done, whether good or bad."

Confusion of mind upon this subject arises from our ambiguous use of the word "salvation." In one sense the Scriptures teach that salvation is universal. Christ is "the Saviour of all men." He "gave Himself a ransom

for all." These declarations are made good in that He has saved all from the common curse of death, and has secured the resurrection of all. But beyond this "common salvation." there is "the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. ii. 10). This alone gives absolute superiority to death and endless progress in life. The resurrection of all does not make necessary this result for all. The issue must still be one of character and fitness. This sure salvation begins now in those "who believe on His name unto life everlasting." This class also constitute the priestly class through whom the blessing of the common salvation shall reach their captive brethren. By sympathy with Christ in His self-sacrifice for others they are baptized with Him for the dead.

It will thus be seen that this doctrine holds fast to the essentials of the Christian faith. It reveals the importance of faith in Christ, while it is true to that primary principle of all Scripture, Old Testament and New, that without righteousness no man shall see the Lord, and that it must be forever ill with the wicked. It thus guards against carelessness of life, whether in the Christian or the worldling. At the same time it shows that there is no change in the administrations of either the grace or the justice of God. They remain the same from age to age. While His justice must ever consign sinful men to death, His grace remains operative to rescue them from death and to put before them the choice of life. We know the adverse conditions under which men make their choice in this world. We have reason to believe that the redemption of all from the death which passed upon all by "the disobedience of one" must bring with it better conditions

and finally save all, is not revealed. A second death is spoken of, but not a second resurrection. We may infer, therefore, that some will prove themselves to be so unworthy and incapable of eternal life, that they will be dropped wholly out of life in the onward sweep of God's great plan by which He is reconciling all things unto Himself.

PROGRESS IN SCRIPTURE KNOWLEDGE.

"And as it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood, before the restitution of all things, and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at—by the continuance and progress of learning and liberty; and by particular persons attending, comparing and pursuing intimations scattered up and down it which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made—by thoughtful men's tracing on obsure hints, as it were, dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible, that a book, which has so long been in the possession of mankind, should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For, all the same phenomena, and the same faculties of investigation from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last age, were equally in possession of mankind several thousand years before. And possibly it might be intended that events, as they come to pass, should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture."—*Butler's Analogy, Part II., Chap. III.*

SYMPATHY OF RELIGIONS.

It is surprising how universally this truth has been recognized among men—that the way for man to attain the knowledge of God and final happiness is through the denial and crucifixion of the flesh. A withdrawal from the outward and sensuous, with the mortification of the flesh, is the Hindoo's path to final union with God. All systems of faith have their anchorites and devotees. Whatever power modern substitutes for Christianity possess, they acquire through this adoption of one of its fundamental principles. It is remarkable, too, how within the church there is this reaching after God through new apprehensions and applications of the old doctrine, that the old man must die out in us in order that the new may be raised up. "Christian Science" is but an attempt to readjust this old truth, that the outward man is unreal, evanescent, perishing—the real life is hid with Christ in God, and that our calling is to be emancipated from the mortal and material conditions in which we have become enslaved through the carnal mind, so that the real life in God may live in and through us, driving out both sin and disease.

It is remarkable, also, how there is growing up among earnest Christians a conviction that this hidden life of God is yet to work greater works in us and among mankind than ever before. We are beginning to see that the miracles which attended the first preaching of the gospel of the kingdom were more than temporary signs. They were the first rivulets of that influx of divine and healing power which shall yet energize and transform the world.

Christians are beginning to ask why this flow of saving health was stayed, and why it is so long delayed. Is the church now a proper channel for it? Must not these fragments of the one body find and be fitted into their proper place, so that life from the Head may flow through unobstructed and healthy channels to bless all nations? Oh, what mighty power to heal, to save and to bless there must be treasured up in the exalted Christ! "According to His riches in glory" is the measure. Would that the Church would set herself earnestly to ask why it is so restrained! One chief cause must be that whereas there are divisions among us we are yet carnal and walk as men. By as much as the carnal man is recognized or allowed to assume control in the church of God, by so much He must refuse to use her as the channel of His grace and power. Union in the Church, therefore, is more than a matter of sentiment. It is a duty, a condition of efficiency and life. Without it the world will not believe, nor will God make known His ways upon earth, His saving health among all nations.

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY.

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty." Most men are in a state of legal bondage, both as to their conduct and their opinions. Not being led of the Spirit they are under the law. There is indeed a restraining and educating power in precepts most useful for those who "walk as men." And weak and imperfect Christians who are more or less controlled by the carnal mind need still

he pleases, because, where the Spirit of the Lord is enthroned, the man will always please to do right. "The law is for the unrighteous man." But where the Spirit of the Lord is, the principle of self-regulation does away with the need of its restraints. No reference to rules is needed, nor can they furnish motives to a true obedience where the law of the Lord is in the mind and in the heart.

And this applies no less to matters of opinion than of practice. As we are prone to fetter the free action of the Spirit of God within us by framing codes and substituting them for the indwelling Spirit of God as the regulator of the life, so in the same way we are prone to look to some man-made creed by which to regulate our opinions, instead of allowing the Spirit to teach us whose office it is to guide into all truth. Creeds, like codes, have their place. They may help to educate into the knowledge of truth the mind imperfectly enlightened by the Spirit. But where the mind is surrendered to His guidance there can be no slavish submission to them. No system of human formulas, however carefully digested and worded, can include all that He may have to teach. Often where the words are faultless in form, the flavor and aroma of the truth they seek to embody evaporates. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there must therefore be liberty to question and amend the best of uninspired creeds. No church ought to set up its confession of faith as embodying the final results of all spiritual wisdom, nor censure its members when they attempt to inquire whether it is in perfect accord with the mind of the Spirit. Checks against error and false doctrine in the church are indeed necessary. And all arrogant or deceitful handling of these mysteries must be con-

demned. But formal submission to a creed is a much less reliable safeguard against these evils than a reverent surrender to the Spirit to be guided as He points out the way. In our eagerness for uniformity we may stifle the spiritual freedom in which alone a true unity subsists. And we may content ourselves with a dead orthodoxy, in lieu of truth illumined to the mind and made vital in the experience by Him who is alone the Truth and the Life.

"NEVER."

Some well-intentioned person has sent us a little tract with the above title. We regret that no name was sent with it. We are accustomed to set forth our views under our own name, and if any one desires to controvert them, we like to have it done openly. Upon these solemn subjects we are willing and anxious to reason together. But we object to being covertly and anonymously arraigned.

For this tract conveys a charge. It thus quotes Mark ix. 43: "And if thy hand offend thee cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the *fire that* NEVER shall be quenched." Upon the basis of this word "Never" it proceeds to say:

"Can the man or woman, who dies in unbelief, *ever* be saved? Mark the solemn answer—NEVER! When God says '*never*,' who shall gainsay it? Who can twist His 'never' so as to bring it within the bounds of human possibility! Nay, who dare try? Who? Alas! it *has* been tried, and, still worse, professed followers of Christ—preachers and teachers—either in blind ignorance or daring self-will have done it. How deeply solemn! Con-

sider well, then. 'NEVER SHALL BE QUENCHED" is the unchanging word of the Lord. There it stands on record, as it fell from the lips of the righteous Judge and gracious Saviour, and, as God is true, there it *shall* stand forever. Not only is the fire 'not quenched' (see verses 44 46, 48), but as the Lord repeats again in verse 45, it *never shall be.*"

Now this is a serious charge. The first thing we have to say in reply is that, if the author of this tract, or the person who sent it, had taken the trouble, or had been able to find out exactly what the Lord said, they might have spared themselves this rhetoric and have escaped this sin of maligning their brethren. For the words "never shall be," upon which he builds so much, are not found either in the Greek or the revised version. Translators sometimes transcend their functions, and under the unconscious influence of an accepted dogma, become interpreters. In this case the King James translators rendered a single Greek word, "*asbeston,*" by a whole phrase, "never shall be quenched." The new version very properly prunes this down, and renders the verse, "rather than having thy two hands, to go into hell, into the unquenchable fire." What we have to deal with, then, is not the phrase "never shall be quenched," which the Lord never used, but the simple adjective, "unquenchable." And concerning it, we have to say that we have never sought to evade its force. We have only insisted that it should be given its proper meaning as determined by Scripture usage. The inference is strangely drawn that this fire, because it is unquenchable, never consumes, but preserves its victims; and that, inasmuch as the men who suffer in it cannot quench it, therefore God cannot or will not. But the examples

for this choice in the future. That some however will still choose evil, and find no forgiveness in the world to come, seems plain from Matthew xii. 31, 32. That the grace of God will pursue them yet further in the ages to come of its use show that the thing intended is, that this fire of God's kindling is one that men cannot quench or arrest until it has done its whole work. And this work is always spoken of as destruction. The concept of a "fire that cannot be quenched" was one with which Jesus' hearers had long been familiar. It occurs often in the prophets. For example, the Lord says through Jeremiah (vii. 20) "Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field and the fruit of the ground; and it shall burn and shall not be quenched." "And I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not; for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger which shall burn forever" (xviii. 4), "I will kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem, and it shall devour the palaces, and it shall not be quenched" (xvii. 27). Does this teach that the gates of Jerusalem were to burn forever? or, that they were to be utterly consumed. Or does it positively preclude any hope that Jerusalem would ever be restored? So also in the first use of the phrase in the New Testament, John the Baptist declares that the Messiah had now come with fan in hand to thoroughly purge His floor, to gather the wheat into His garner and to "*burn up* the chaff with unquenchable fire." Does this prove that the chaff is to be kept burning forever? If so, how can it be "burnt up?" This inference that, because the fire cannot be quenched, therefore those cast into it will be kept

burning in it forever cannot stand a moment. And it never would have been thought of had not the Church been misled by the fiction, which it has been the mission of this Magazine to expose, that our Lord in such teaching refers to a punishment in store for men *after* their resurrection. Whereas there is not a word in Mark ix, nor in any parallel passage, nor in Matt. xxv. 31–46, which intimates that He has in view any other class but living men, in flesh and blood, whose *present* life was in danger of the loss He threatened. Men were warned to lop off the members of their present bodies in order to save the whole of them from being destroyed in hell. It was a death and destruction which lies this side of resurrection which He urged them to avoid. And it is because men do not understand the Gospel of the resurrection, nor the place and meaning it holds in the divine economy, that they fall into such wretched travesties as this tract puts forth under the name of Gospel. It is indeed a fearful doom which our Lord urges here His disciples to escape; and it is significant that all these harsh sayings were spoken to disciples rather than to the multitude. We know not what loss and bankruptcy of our present heritage of life in manhood this doom involves. But we do know it is a loss to be shunned at every sacrifice and denial of self. But to say that it is a gulf of endless torment so deep that no restoring hand of God can ever lift out of it, is to limit His power where He has not limited it, and to utterly misconceive the Gospel of His grace by which He has provided, beyond this region of penalty in death and hell, to take up again the case of lost man through a resurrection of the dead.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

THE PRESBYTERY OF NASSAU.—We are glad to see that this Presbytery is renewing the attempt it made last year to induce the General Assembly to take up the work of revising its Confession. It has appointed a committee to memorialize other Presbyteries upon the subject. This committee, consisting of Rev. Samuel T. Carter, Alex. G. Russell and George R. Payson, have sent a circular letter to the stated clerk of every Presbytery in the Church, inviting them to co-operate in the movement. They say,

We do not stand alone in desiring such revision. The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland has adopted a "Declaratory Act," setting forth its understanding of the Confession. The English Presbyterian Church has prepared an entirely new Confession, which is now under consideration by all its congregations. We are confident, also, that we speak the convictions of many minds in our own church upon this matter.

The special statements the Presbytery points out as "going beyond the word of God, and as opposed to the convictions and repugnant to the feelings of very many of our most worthy and thoughtful members," are the following from Chapter III., Secs. 3–7:

"By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death."

"These angels and men, thus pre-destined and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished."

"Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."

The Scriptures do certainly teach election, but if these brethren would only open their eyes to the fact that God has other ages to come for the complete unfolding of His purposes toward the human race, of which His provision to raise them from the dead is the crowning proof, and that the elect of this age are called that they may become a seed of blessing in the age to

come, they would see how they might hold fast to this truth without the dishonoring perversions of it contained in the above statements. If the Presbyterian Church must hold fast to the dogma, that there is no provision for the salvation of any of mankind except in the present life, and no purpose of mercy in the provision to restore all men to another life beyond the grave, they had better not attempt to improve these Westminster statements. They will be forced to retreat from their hard doctrine behind some Pelagian figment of free will and fair probation for all in this present life, but one in which the logic neither of reason or Scripture will suffer them long to take refuge.

THE FALL.—A prominent Episcopal clergyman writes to us, "I am entirely persuaded that so long as one accepts the Augustinian anthropology, he cannot very well escape the Calvinistic eschatology." With his note he sends for our inspection an article on the "Fall," in which he very properly shows how much theology has tampered with the simple narrative of Genesis ii. and iii., and how the so-called "fall" is really a stage in the moral training of the race, and how it fits in with what science is so instructively teaching us in these last days concerning the mode of its development.

We have long thought that the old theology misreads this early history, and so lays the basis for that wrong conception of the attitude of God toward the human race which has kept it so long away from Him, in bondage to fear, and has oppressed it with such dark and cruel views of the future.

A leading Congregational minister of New England told his congregation on last Thanksgiving day that theology is now on the eve of the greatest revolution it has known since the introduction of Christianity. Henry Ward Beecher made it the closing effort of his life to prepare for the changes that must come through the acceptance of the truth of Evolution. We have ourselves sought to prepare the way for the new eschatology, which is as sure to come as the sunrising, and which shall restore to Christianity the Gospel contained in its primary

doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. All departments in theology are, however, parts in one system. And there is deep truth in our friend's remark that the old anthropology lays the foundation for the dark views of human destiny against which we have been contending. It follows also, as a matter of course, that if we can show these views to be wrong, the system of which they are an outgrowth must be wrong at the start.

A Good Man's Life.—Bishop John H. Vincent of the M. E. Church, who lately visited the Holy Land, writes a very interesting account to *The Independent* of March 7th of the recent death of Horatio G. Spafford, and of his self-denying labors as the leader of what is known as the American Colony in Jerusalem. We are glad to see this tardy justice done to the memory of one who, however eccentric, was a most saintly man. Mr Spafford was somewhat of the same type of Christian with General Gordon. We have seen it stated, without contradiction, of them both, that they rejected the doctrine of an endless hell. Their views of the merciful purposes of God toward the human race broke through the traditional lines of the old theology. This creates for us a special interest in this account of Mr. Spafford's life and death. It is often assumed that the larger hope tends to make the Christian indifferent to the salvation of his fellowmen. On the contrary, as this case forcibly illustrates, it is the men who most love their fellowmen, and sacrifice themselves for their welfare, who are the best prepared to embrace this hope. Grim views of the eternal despair of vast numbers of God's creatures, dying in their sins because the true Saviour from sin has not been revealed to them, cannot long find place in the atmosphere of such love for man as filled this good man's heart.

We quote at length from Bishop Vincent's article:

I learned the story of this Colony, which is substantially as follows: About ten years ago the "Ville du Havre," of the French Line, was lost at sea. On the deck as she was going down there stood a lady and four daughters, wife and children of a lawyer in the City of Chicago, Horatio G. Spafford, Esq. They joined

hands, exchanged words of comfort and faith, and went down with the ship into the ingulfing waters. The mother alone came to the surface, and was rescued. She was taken by a passing vessel to some port on the Irish coast whence she telegraphed to her husband the mournful news. He hurried to her side, and at once, as they bowed together on the occasion of their reunion, consecrated themselves anew to the service of Christ. It may be, it is indeed probable, that their minds were by the terrible calamity unhinged and unbalanced. It may be that this mental misadjustment affected their religious experiences and conduct. They adopted and announced positive and peculiar views on certain religious subjects for which they were opposed by many; and they resolved with a company of friends, about twelve in all, who accepted their views, to abandon business and social life in America and go to Jerusalem, as they believed under divine direction, to perform there a given work in the name of Christ.

All had been connected with Evangelical churches. They were now dissatisfied with the worldliness of the Church, objecting to the publicity with which so many Christians narrated their religious experiences, believing that in the Christian life there must be more utter self-surrender to the Lord, more self-sacrifice in his service, more practical philanthropy, and more secrecy in alms-giving. Several persons afterward joined the party—one a captain in the English Army, his wife, the daughter of an English colonel, and another, a clergyman of the Church of England, who went to Palestine originally with General Gordon. The members of the Colony give little attention to mere doctrinal views. They take delight in the study of the Holy Scriptures, especially do they emphasize the divine promises, and claim to make it their life work to secure the fulfillment of these promises. They have a daily meeting for the study of Scripture, for prayer, and for sacred song. They live economically and depend largely upon donations from home which have been much reduced by bitter misrepresentations made concerning them. Everybody in the house takes part in domestic work. In the evenings at their family prayer many guests come in, Jews, Mohammedans, farmers, shepherds, soldiers, Bedawin of the desert, young Turkish noblemen, and others; and it is said that they enjoy the friendship of the Turkish officials.

The Colony is full of good works. They care for the blind, minister to the insane, feed beggars, watch the sick, turn their quarters into a hospital when occasion requires, entertain tourists, keep no record of their work, and publish nothing to the world.

One very singular fact is recorded concerning a large company of Jews from Arabia which came to Jerusalem about the time of the arrival of the Americans. There were about three hundred of them, a remnant as they themselves assert of the ancient tribe of Gadites, calling themselves Temanites. Certain impressions received in their own land brought them to Jerusalem. They were by their brethren, the Jerusalem Jews, received with great coldness, their coming involving a division of funds sent from Europe for the support of the Jews in the Holy City. These Gadites were in great want. The American Colony found them, and began their work of benevolence by giving daily rations of soup. When they, unaccustomed to the American cooking, complained, the Colony found a Jewess who did the cooking for the Gadites. Now this strange people, the Gadites, have a prosperous settlement in the village of Siloam to the southeast of the city proper, and in their synagogue it is said they pray every week for the Americans. A friend has sent me a copy of this Jewish prayer, pronounced in the synagogue every Jewish Sabbath:

"Thou who blest our fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, bless and guard and keep Horatio Spafford and his household, and all that are joined with him, because he has shown mercy to us and our children. Therefore may the Lord make his days long in righteousness. May the Lord's mercy shelter him. In his and in our day may Judah be helped, and Israel rest peaceably; and may the Redeemer come to Zion. Amen."

There are not many Jews in Jerusalem who pray for the Christians they know!

A few months ago Mr. Spafford died. In the early part of July he was attacked by fever. After four weeks he began to recover. In the latter part of September he met with a relapse, and on the afternoon of Tuesday, September 25th, passed away. A Jerusalem correspondent says to the tourist whose words I have just quoted:

"About the last thing Mr. Spafford said was: 'A great joy has come to me.' A blessed peace reigned about him throughout; and as he lay in his casket he had such a peaceful expression that those who saw him said it was difficult to realize he was dead."

The influence of Mr. Spafford upon the natives was never more manifested than after his death. Mohammedan friends prepared the body for burial. Young Mohammedans wept as though a father had been taken from them. At the funeral the hymn of his own composition, "Is it well with my soul?" was read. The correspondent continues:

"Representatives of every nation and people in Jerusalem

were at the funeral; Jews and Mohammedans especially desired to bear the remains. The orphans of the Jews' School, the pupils and teachers from the school of the Israelitish Alliance put wreaths on the coffin, as did many others, and all classes insisted upon being permitted to take turns in carrying the body from the house to the grave. On arrival there, a Russian gentleman, the principal singer in the Russian Greek Cathedral, asked permission to speak, and in the Russian language paid a tribute to one who was 'a father to the fatherless, and who had pre-eminently given his life for others.' The flag at the Consulate stood at half-mast from the time of his death until after the funeral. The Pasha (the Governor of Jerusalem) called the next day to express his sorrow, and wept as he spoke of him. The American Consul said: 'No one will miss Mr. Spafford more than myself. It has been a great blessing to have such a man as he in Jerusalem.'"

THE FATHERS UPON PREACHING TO THE DEAD—We take from the *Andover Review* this quotation from Clement of Alexandria:

"If, then, He preached the gospel to those in the flesh for this reason that they might not be condemned unjustly, how is it [conceivable] that He did not preach it for the same cause to those who had departed this life before the advent?"

Also this from the learned Eusebius of Cæsarea:

"For the point of His departure from men was made by Him a beginning. For the laws of love to men called Him even to death and to the dead themselves, that He might recall the souls of those long dead; for He cared for the salvation of all who have lived since the world began; also that He might bring to nought him that hath the power of death, as the divine oracles teach . . . . breaking asunder the eternal gates of the dark innermost recesses, and by reversal opening for the dead, bound there by the chains of death, the way of ascent to life. . . . And He, the Saviour of all and our Lord, the Christ of God, called the Victorious One, in the predictions of the prophets is introduced as mocking at death, and loosing the souls bound there for whom He offers the hymn of victory, singing, 'I will rescue them from the hand of Hades, and I will redeem their souls from death.'"

WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. V.] MAY, 1889. [No. 5.

CORRECTION.

Some bad mistakes were made by the compositor in the last number.

The first two lines on page 112 belong to top of page 118.

The first four lines on page 121 belong to top of page 115.

The sense is thus marred on four pages. We request subscribers to mark these corrections on the margin, so that chance readers may not be confused.

PREBENDARY ROW ON FUTURE RETRIBUTION.

This recent work by a well known dignitary of the Church of England has been loaned to us by a friend for perusal and criticism. We have read the book with pleasure and profit. It is, perhaps, the most complete discussion of this subject that the modern agitation of it has called forth. It is gratifying to see that the general conclusions at which the author arrives, after his wide survey of the subject in the light of reason and revelation, are very much like our own; although he does not reach them in

the same satisfactory way. He fails to make proper use of the light which the hope of resurrection throws upon this whole subject, and is hampered by the old view which locates the sinner's death-penalty for the sins of this life after that change, instead of before it; so that the "hope of the dead" lies for him in a supposed intermediate state, rather than where the Scriptures place it—in the fact that the dead are to be raised to another life.

One of the most valuable chapters in the book is the second, in which it is shown that the divine attributes of justice, holiness, and love cannot differ essentially from the human conception of these qualities, as it is affirmed by man's enlightened conscience and moral sense. God, in being just, cannot violate our sense of justice, seeing that it is derived in us from Him. Moreover the Scripture constantly bases its appeals for confidence in the divine judgments to our human sense of what is true and right.

The bearing of this principle upon the question of future retribution is very important; for we hear it constantly affirmed that man is not competent to judge of what we may expect a wise and good God to do, seeing that His ways are far above our ways. The finite cannot comprehend, nor sit in judgment upon the infinite. Upon this point the author speaks, as follows:

The inference has been drawn that because God is infinite and man finite, all our supposed knowledge of God's character and perfections is not a knowledge of God as He actually exists, but one which is only relative; or, in other words, that justice, holiness, mercy, and benevolence, as they exist in God, may differ widely from our human conceptions of those qualities. To put the matter plainly, according to this theory, our human conception of justice

may differ widely from that of justice as it exists in God; and when St. Paul declares that He will judge the world in righteousness, God's standard of what constitutes a righteous judgment may differ widely from our human conception of what constitutes justice.

The author then goes on to show that these are the principles upon which Agnosticism erects its philosophical system. The Christian Agnostic accepts the same principle, that God's attributes cannot be known; only he affirms that the knowledge of Him has been imparted through a revelation. But if the human understanding, because it is finite, cannot attain any real knowledge of an infinite God, then this limitation would prevent its receiving a true knowledge of Him even by a revelation. Not even infinite power can put a gallon into a vessel that is capable of holding only a pint. The position therefore is fatal to Christianity.

The author applies this to the frequent attempts that are made to defend the popular theology in its affirmations of what God has in store for the wicked after death. Many of its positions are felt to be inconsistent with the ideas of justice, holiness, and mercy, as they are affirmed by the enlightened moral sense of mankind. He shows, however, that these do furnish a proper standard of judgment in the case, and that to affirm the contrary is "to put into the hands of unbelief a more dangerous weapon than it has ever wielded against Theism and Christianity, as is abundantly proved by the state of modern unbelieving thought."

The book then proceeds to an exhaustive examination of the teaching of the Old and New Testament Scriptures

upon the subject of future retribution. Its general conclusions are:

1, With respect to the Old Testament, that, with two exceptions (and these occur in books of a very late date), it does not base its appeals to men upon the fact that a judgment awaits them beyond the grave; nor does it make use of the doctrine of future torment as a deterrent from sin.

2, With respect to the words of our Lord, he concludes that, while they were designed to impress those who heard them that unrepented sin will be hereafter attended with awful consequences, there is nothing in the symbols used which suggests that the fate of such sinners would be a conscious existence in torments which would never end. On the contrary, the imagery suggests that of ultimate destruction.

3, "Nor do the terms used by the Apostolic writers convey the idea that the punishment threatened was an endless existence in never-ending torment, nor do these writers drop any hint that they intended their readers to attach such a special and technical meaning to the words in question. In fact, to have used them in this sense, without even a hint that this was the thing intended, would have been to employ words in a sense which would have been both non-natural and misleading."

While the author calls attention to some things with which the theory of the destructibility of man has been needlessly encumbered, he holds strongly to its main principle. He finds fault with the Conditional Immortality theory as usually presented, because it fails to make room for that restoring work of God's grace which must follow man beyond the grave so long as there is any good in him,

and he remains capable of recovery to holiness and to God. Respecting those, however, in whom the reign of evil has become absolute and complete, and who are therefore irrecoverable, he declares that the habitual language of our Lord and His apostles admits of but one interpretation. The words can only have the natural meaning which they bore in the Greek spoken in the primitive Christian societies, and of which the English word "destruction" and others of kindred meaning, are sufficiently accurate representations. To attribute to these expressions the meaning of never-ending existence in never-ending torment, is to attribute to them a wholly non-natural signification. The author says here:

It is a blessed truth, affirmed by the Christian revelation, that there is a time coming in the future when God will have reconciled all things unto Himself; and when evil will cease to exist in the universe which He has created. There are only two ways in which this can be effected—either by the conversion of evil beings, or by causing them to cease to exist. The Universalist affirms that it is in accordance with the Divine character that the mode in which this will be effected will be by their ultimate conversion. This, the language of the New Testament, taken in its obvious meaning, denies. It remains, therefore, that the second alternative is the only possible one; that evil beings will cease to exist either by an exertion of God's almighty power, or because He has so constituted the moral universe that, under His providential government, the disease of evil will ultimately destroy man's spiritual and moral being, just as incurable physical disease destroys his bodily life.

He does not believe, however, that this end will be reached in the case of any until they have been fairly

tested by a knowledge of the Gospel, and under better conditions than those in which large portions of mankind are placed in this life. He therefore believes that the true probation of such is after death.

We stated at the outset that, while agreeing with the writer in many of his conclusions, we were not satisfied with the way he reaches them. The author gives glimpses of a better solution of this whole subject than any he suggests. He says (pg. 179) that a striking feature of the New Testament doctrine is that "in resting the realization of the highest aspirations of man on the promise of a resurrection instead of on the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, or even on its survival after the death of the body, its writers ran counter to the entire course of ancient philosophic thought." Again (pp. 410), "With the exception of a few passages which speak of the condition of departed saints as one of happiness, rest, and peace, the New Testament preserves an almost total silence respecting the condition of man between death and the resurrection. In appealing to men's hopes and fears, its writers do not rest their appeal on what is commonly called 'the doctrine of the immortality of the soul,' but on a future resurrection, which is to take place at the coming of the Lord."

Now, if our author, in thus discerning the paramount place of resurrection in the Bible scheme of man's future, had only made this the key by which to unlock the mysteries of "future retribution," he would have presented a more consistent scheme and have made a better book. He would have seen that man's penalty for sin lies in death, and in the destruction in hell which lies just beyond it, that this sheol or hell is no proper place for a future

probation, that God's judgment upon man for sin must be exhausted there, before there is room for grace to take up his case again, and that whatever hope there is for him lies in the provision God has made to raise him from the dead. He would have seen that, as Jesus plainly taught that His judgment of the world would begin when He was raised up to be both Lord and Christ, so also the resurrection of the dead—each in his own time and order—is not necessarily postponed to a distant judgment day. And he would have been able to more rightly divide the word of truth, by discriminating between those Scriptures which address men as disciples of Christ and candidates for fellowship with Him in the administration of His kingdom, and such as bear upon mankind at large, who cannot be judged by the tests of faith in and obedience to Him, but by the light which they have had, and by the law of deeds done, whether good or bad, as that law is written on the universal conscience.

While the author has been able to throw much light upon this whole subject, both upon the rational principles which underlie it and upon the Scripture passages and terms which bear upon it, there are certain vital principles which he has overlooked. He does not attach sufficient importance to death as the wages of sin, and defers the sinner's threatened destruction to a hell of the distant future, instead of finding it in the hell which now yawns beneath him. He therefore makes room for "another chance" before a final infliction of penalty, whereas the penalty must first be paid before the grace of God can act. He thus misconceives the purpose of resurrection, as if it prepared for retribution, and conveyed no new opportunity of

blessing with its new gift of life. And yet we all admit that even the unjust dead are raised because Christ arose. How much more reasonable therefore to look upon this recovery as redemptive, and to connect with it whatever of blessing the future may have in store for any class of the dead.

PRESBYTERIAN REVISION.

Since our abortive effort four years ago to initiate a movement for the revision of the Westminster Confession, a marked progress has been made in this direction. That question is rapidly coming to the front in the Presbyterian Church of America, while in Scotland it has become a vital issue which can no longer be deferred.

It has been a constant surprise to us that Scotch and English Presbyterians should be so much in advance of those in this country in this matter. One would think that we would be in the van in such a movement, and that the obstruction to it would come from the other side. On the contrary the Church here, up to this time, is lagging far behind.

As far back as 1879 the United Presbyterian Church of Great Britain adopted a declaratory statement which greatly relieved the consciences of many of its ministers and members in their acceptance of the Standards. The English Presbyterians are just now about to vote upon a recently prepared creed which, when adopted, will virtually supplant the old Confession as their standard of faith. At the coming May meeting of the Free Church Assembly the matter will come up on overture from three of the

strongest Presbyteries in that connection. Upon motion of Professor Blaikie the Presbytery of Edinburgh, after a week's consideration, by a vote of 35 to 30 declared that "whereas the Confession of the Church ought to be in harmony with her present and living faith," it is desirable that the Assembly take the whole subject of the Confession and the terms of subscription to it into consideration. Glasgow adopted a similar paper by a vote of 71 to 19. The Presbytery of Aberdeen voted in the same way unanimously. *The Witness* speaks of this action as "the first step in a movement which may end in a controversy the most bitter and painful that the Presbyterian Church has passed through since the Revolution, and one that may be followed by serious results. These Presbyteries have passed resolutions expressing dissatisfaction with the Westminster Confession as in some respects out of harmony with the living faith of the Church, and stating their opinion that some method ought to be adopted in order to relieve candidates for the ministry from the obligation of accepting all that it contains." It is true that the agitation of this matter will provoke a serious conflict; but conflict is far less harmful to the Church than dishonest acquiescence. These Presbyteries state a truth which can neither be denied nor longer ignored, when they say that the living faith of the Church has outgrown and virtually discarded some of these old statements. It is a duty then she owes both to God and to man to so alter them that they shall express what she really believes. If she seeks to escape this duty now, the neglect will cost her not only present disgrace, but a far worse struggle in the future.

We observe that even in the antipodes a similar move-

ment is in progress. At the last annual meeting of the Synod of the Provinces of Otago and Southland, in New Zealand, a committee was appointed to prepare a report upon this subject. On this side of the ocean the Church in Canada is also being stirred up. A friend has sent us recent copies of the *Toronto Mail*, from which we make the following extracts:

At the meeting of the Presbytery of Toronto, on April 2d, the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, pastor of St. Andrew's, offered the following:

Whereas, the Church of Christ should be careful not to exclude from the ministry any man whom the Lord of the Church would receive;

Whereas, the desired union of the several branches of the Church would necessarily involve the adoption of a common standard for admission to the ministry;

Whereas, the present terms of subscription in the Presbyterian Church in Canada have the effect of excluding from its ministry men who are acknowledged to be true ministers of the Gospel in other branches of the Church; and

Whereas, the confession of the Church should express its living faith; and whereas the Westminster Confession errs both by excess and by defect, unduly emphasizing some aspects of truth while it does not give their due place to others which are equally important;

It is humbly overtured to the venerable, the General Assembly, to take such action as it may deem best in the premises in the way of either altering the terms of subscription, or substituting for said confession some briefer statement of the truths which are considered vital.

In explanation of his resolution Rev. Mr. Macdonnell said that he had hoped for some years that some one else would have taken up this question, but as no one had volunteered the task he had determined to come forward himself. He indicated that the general drift of this overture was in harmony with the

action at present being taken in several branches of the Presbyterian Church. The revision of the constitution of the Church was something which they must expect to take place in the near future. He referred to the action of the Free Church of Scotland in this regard, also of the Presbytery of Edinburgh on the overture of Dr. Blaikie, and of Aberdeen, Greenock, and Glasgow in the same direction. The action which he was asking them to take was not anything out of harmony with the tendencies exhibited within every one of the leading Churches in Scotland, and England. This was, however a question for themselves. He then read over the clauses of the resolution, and asked the meeting if they could not all agree to the first clause. Several members replying that they dissented from this clause, he said that this was his primary position. There were men in the Methodist and other Churches to-day whom they admired and were glad to have preach from their pulpits on many occasions. They were men whom they all acknowledged to be true ministers of the Gospel of Christ, but whom they could not admit to the Presbyterian Church on account of their existing regulations. They recognized them in every sense as ministers of Jesus Christ as they were, but they could not admit them to the hedged and walled portion of the Church—Presbyterianism. He said that it would be more consistent if they took the attitude of the High Church party, which said to them all, "You are very worthy men, but we cannot recognize you as ministers, because you have not been properly ordained." This was more courteous and consistent than their action. The Presbyterian Church recognized the ministers of the other Churches, but yet excluded them from its ministry on certain subordinate points, while they were acknowledged to be ministers of the Gospel in other branches of the Church of Christ. He maintained that the men who drew up the tenets and articles of belief of the Church did not dream of its dividing into Methodist, Baptist, Congregational, and other sections. They thought only of a catholic church for the whole world. It was to have been a universal Church, not confined to one race, or nation, or kingdom. He said that there was no word in the confession of faith indi-

cative of this state of things being made permanent, and he could not think that the promoters of it ever dreamt that good men would stand on the platform to-day and say that this was the very thing that God intended. It was nothing of the sort. He said that the sooner the splits in the Christian Church in Canada were removed the better for Christianity and religious liberty. This was one of the strongest reasons that induced him to bring forward this resolution. It was in view of the dangers which menaced the Church in Canada. He contended that they were bound to admit men whom the Lord would admit. He was willing to be bound by the Word of God, but he would not be bound by any Synod or Assembly, or fathers or Pope. The confession of faith should be a confession of faith of the living Church of this day. This was its intention. They must recognize to-day the necessity for revision of the confession of faith, and that it was not a full expression of the living faith of the Church. It erred by excess and defect, by emphasizing some things of less importance than others omitted or not brought into sufficient prominence. He quoted as an instance the insistence laid upon the divine sovereignty and the insufficient emphasizing of the divine love. He said that this did not preserve the proper balance of truth. The confession of faith set forth God as a stern and righteous judge, and not so fully in the character of a righteous and loving Father. God was a judge, and a stern judge, but He was also a righteous father, and it was of more consequence to insist upon God's character as a righteous father than as a stern judge. He quoted many other examples, but this, he said, was one of the most important. He concluded by moving the adoption of the resolution.

After full and earnest debate, it was found that only about one-third of the Presbytery voted in favor. Some who favored the revision itself strongly objected to the preamble. This, we are pleased to see, was the only reason why the Rev. Dr. S. H. Kellogg opposed the measure. In a subseuent communication to *The Mail*, he explains as follows:

That which I "strenuously opposed" was not the overture, but the preamble upon which it was based. The overture proposed two alternatives regarding the Confession, namely, "either altering the terms of subscription, or substituting for said Confession some briefer statement of the truths which are considered vital." Instead of "strenuously opposing" these suggestions, as regards the first alternative, I argued at length that a modification of the terms of subscription such as was proposed was most desirable; as regards the second alternative, I said in substance that while, naturally, I could not endorse such briefer statement of articles of faith until it was placed before us, I was not prepared to condemn such a movement in advance, so that we preserved intact the system of doctrine presented in the Westminster Confession. I further added, that I thought it highly desirable that the Assembly should appoint a committee charged with a careful examination and revision of the texts of Scripture adduced in the Westminster standards in support of their various propositions.

What, in common with the other gentlemen mentioned, I did "strenuously oppose" was the preamble which we were asked to adopt as the basis of the proposed overture. I felt, in common with many others, that the suggestion of the preamble would involve practically and inevitably the abolition of all requirements from our ministers and elders in the way of doctrinal belief.

While we think that this preamble might have been more cautiously drawn, we yet rejoice to see that in it Mr. Macdonnell is far in advance of the other foremost movers in this matter. In no other Presbytery has an overture been asked for on the grand basis upon which he makes his plea —the desire for unity in the one Church of the one Lord. Even the motive of honesty in testimony and subscription is inferior to this—the desire to place the Church in that attitude toward other Christian bodies which will facilitate that union among them all for which our Lord prayed, and

without which the world will never believe. And we regret to see that, while Dr. Kellogg complains of the laxness of the terms proposed, he fails to do justice to the nobility of the end sought, "the desired union of the several branches of the Church through the adoption of a common standard for admission to the ministry." For ourselves, we confess that this was a prime motive in the effort we made in the Presbytery of West Jersey four years ago, and in the establishment of this magazine, which forced our withdrawal from the Church. We were convinced that the attitude of the Church toward the Westminster Confession was a standing barrier to the realization of that unity for which Jesus prayed, and upon which the world's acknowledgment of Him as Lord depends.

As stated in our April number, the Presbytery of Nassau forwarded their appeal to the General Assembly one year ago. At the meeting in this city it was given the go-by; but it is on the docket for the coming meeting in May at New York. This Presbytery has also sent out a circular letter to all its sister Presbyteries asking their co-operation in the movement. Already the movement for silence has begun. The Presbyterian Journal of this city entreats the Presbyteries to allow this circular to fall still-born at their coming meetings. A correspondent of that paper arraigns bitterly the Nassau Presbytery, and virtually tells them that if any of them find the formulas of the confession "opposed to their convictions" and "repugnant to their feelings," and as "going beyond the word of God" they ought as honest men to leave the church and go elsewhere. So far as we are informed, the Presbyteries who have taken up the circular sent from that body have acted ad-

versely. We observe that in the old Philadelphia Presbytery Dr. Arthur T. Pierson raised a breeze by a resolution looking toward the removal by the Assembly of the section relating to elect infants. He quoted Drs. McCosh and Hall as favoring its modification. Elder George Junkin spoke strongly against any tinkering whatsoever with the Confession. Others followed in the same line, some opposing the change on grounds of principle, others, of expediency, and it was overwhelmingly defeated. We understand that in some of the Western papers, especially the *Herald and Presbyter*, the question of revision is more considerately treated.

While therefore there is real progress in this movement, it is a long way from success. And the reason we believe to be that it has not yet been placed upon the high ground of fidelity to Scripture and to that high ideal of a united and triumphant Church which our Divine Head has set before us. Expediency yet rules. Moreover the leaders in this movement have not yet discerned the weak point of the Confession, or if they have, they keep it concealed. Its weakest point is its eschatology. Its statement of the doctrine of divine decrees, which is the special point of the present attack, is scripturally true up to a certain point. God has an elect seed, and this implies that in choosing them He has passed by others. The great error of the Standards lies in the inference that His economy of redemption does not reach beyond the possibilities of this present life, and that those passed by are therefore doomed to everlasting damnation. These brethren need yet to learn from Scripture that the elect of this age are chosen that they may become the seed of blessing in an age to come to the non-

elect. They need to know that the provision of a future life for the race through a Divine Redeemer, after it had incurred the sentence of death, was for the purpose of bringing it within the scope of this redemptive plan; and, therefore, that the view of resurrection inserted in the Confession, which makes it an inconceivable disaster to all but the elect, is a libel on the grace and character of Him who "drew this wondrous plan," and a direct nullification of that gospel of hope which He began to speak by the mouth of all His holy prophets, and which was proclaimed at the birth of Jesus as glad tidings of great joy to all people. If the secrets of all hearts could be revealed, it would be found that the prevalent discontent with the Confession, while skirmishing around other points, is really concerned with this monstrous perversion of the truth and righteousness of God, and of His Name of Love, which represents Him, after inflicting His appointed penalty and consigning sinners to death and hell, as raising them out of this pit to judge them again, and send them back to a redoubled and ceaseless torment in unspeakable agonies of body and soul with the devil and his angels in hell-fire forever. These are its words; and we hazard nothing in saying that this horrific representation of God, which has lain like a nightmare over the Christian world for centuries, is mainly responsible for the atheism and agnosticism and the other forms of disbelief with which the Church is now compelled to do battle as for her life. And we are sure also that all attempts to relieve this awful picture by views of man's freedom and responsibility which are false to Scripture, and to history and human experience, will only heal this "hurt of the daughter of my people slightly." The Pres-

byterian Church had better let its Confession alone unless it is willing to go down to this bottom of her trouble, and learn anew the gospel of the resurrection. Men, who are skirmishing around its weak points, may as well put up their weapons, unless they are willing to assail this vital mistake by which the face of God has been made to wear the mask of a fiend, and His gospel of joy to the nations been turned into a knell of dark despair. This is the point at which we began our assault four years ago, and these brethren will have to come to it, or the canker they are seeking to root out of their system will be left in it to destroy it. As we have often explained, this gospel of hope for the dead is not universalism. But it is Scripture: and it is Science. It reveals a just and loving God working along the ages in creation and redemption to produce an anointed race, made in His own image, to possess and administer His vast estate. It shows how evil types are given over to the eternal fire, but that a light of hope through re-creation has been kindled for man beyond even this grave of fire. That some souls will prove worthless and be destroyed by it is in anology with what we see going on in all God's working. That others will come out of it with the "suffering of loss," and with such bankruptcy of their former estate in life as may involve the loss of former personality—the "loss of self" (Luke ix. 25)–is also probable. But that this fire is for endless torment is a purely pagan conceit, grafted on to the teachings of Scripture. The lost in this onward progress of the race to its high goal must "perish from the way," as the word so plainly teaches, and God at last be all in all, all things being reconciled to Him. But this

universalistic side of redemption, this wide reach of our Lord's triumph over death by which it brings blessing to the dead as well as the living, this gracious purpose in His election by which a first born seed are quickened to life in order that they may become the vehicle of blessing to their lost and captive brethren, even among the dead, must be set over against the dark and gloomy conception outlined in the Westminster Confession, before this "face of the covering cast over all people" shall be taken away from the face of God, and the world shall truly see His glory as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ, and be transformed by it.

SCRIPTURE MISAPPLIED.

A Presbyterian minister remarked to us that the prime argument against revising the Confession lies in the fact that its severest expressions are fully matched by words just as severe in Scripture. But how are these words to be understood? Were they intended to convey the meaning the Confession puts upon them? We affirm that its main proof-texts for the doctrine of endless torment are misapplied because mis-located. Private instructions to disciples, such as Mark ix. 43–50, Heb. xii. 29, are treated as if they were public warnings addressed to the multitude. Warnings against an impending loss of body and soul in hell are quoted as if they related to a remote casting into hell of body and soul after a distant resurrection. The eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord which was to overtake dwellers on the earth at the Lord's coming, is applied to a supposed destruction that awaits them after they are raised from the dead. The judgment of the living nations of mankind, which was declared as

about to begin before that generation passed away, is viewed as a far distant event, deferred until after the resurrection of all the dead. Let the Church put these passages in their right place, and adjust them in their right relation to the general teaching of Scripture concerning "the hope and resurrection of the dead," and she will see how these severe texts have their limitations. She will find that she has been unconsciously led into an obscuration of the main feature of the Gospel, and of the face of God as therein revealed. Fidelity to Scripture has been a marked feature of the Presbyterian Church. Her present bewilderment over her Confession, which she is more than half convinced misrepresents the general tone of Scripture, is largely due to the fact that she does not know what to do with such texts as Matthew xxv. 41, 46, which seem to teach the everlasting punishment of the wicked in a hell of eternal fire. She has been trying to ameliorate and soften and vaporize into the cloud-land of metaphor the rough teaching of these verses, and with poor success. Let her now try the experiment of putting them in their right location, and view them as warnings of a destruction overhanging living men, and not dead men hereafter to be raised, and she will see how they are all bounded and illumined by that hope of resurrection which lies beyond the penalty they threaten. In brief, her whole eschatology, which assumes that resurrection is an infinite curse to all but the elect, will have to be rewritten and readjusted around the principle that this recovery of mankind from death to another opportunity of life is the very redemptive provision of the Gospel, of which God spake by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

THE TYRANNY OF ISOLATED TEXTS.

An example of this was furnished in a sermon to which we listened a few days ago in Association Hall. The subject had been announced—"What is Eternal Punishment?" and a large and interested congregation were gathered. The text chosen was Matt. xxv. 46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."

The subject was ably and solemnly presented from the orthodox standpoint. No more momentous theme can possibly be imagined than this; and therefore the utmost care and candor are required in dealing with human souls under it, so that on the one hand a distorted view may not be given of the character of God and of the Gospel of His grace, and, on the other, men may be warned of their real danger. This sermon did not satisfy these conditions.

1. The preacher was not careful to state precisely what the Lord said. He assumed that the English phrases exactly set forth what fell from His lips. He must have known that such scholars as Tayler Lewis, Robert Young, and many others insist that the word "everlasting" is not a just translation of the Greek word *aionion*. We commend to him the able discussion of this subject in Prebendary Row's recent work on *Future Retribution*. Nor does the word *kolasin* mean vindictive punishment. Liddell and Scott would have told him this. Moreover, it is not *certain* that Jesus used the word "punishment." The two oldest Italic versions, which were the Scriptures in common use in the Latin Church before Jerome's version, read "fire," as given in verse 41 (See Row, as above, pp. 268). If this were the word used, then the usage of this term in

Scripture favors the idea that the penalty inflicted is destruction, and not endless life in misery. In a matter of such tremendous importance every hearer has the right to know precisely what our Lord said. No preacher has the right to build his sermon on such a theme, as if the English words were the infallible and unquestioned record in the case.

2. The preacher assumed that Jesus addressed this solemn warning to the promiscuous hearers who were accustomed to crowd around him. The record tells us that they were spoken privately to a few of the disciples.

3. He assumed that those judged were tested by the sole standard of their acceptance or rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ; whereas the implication is that neither class had ever heard of Him; and the standard of character is plainly defined as the practice or neglect of humane and righteous works.

4. The speaker made no account of the emphatic assertion of Jesus that all these events associated with His coming would begin to come to pass before that generation passed away.

5. Hence he fell into the vital mistake of ignoring the bearing of the doctrine of the resurrection upon this whole question of man's future. He virtually assumed that this is a post-resurrection scene, and that these multitudes, however they may be punished before, are sent back to hell after they are raised; whereas there is not a word about resurrection in the whole discourse. It is the living nations of mankind who here pass in review before the Son of Man. The unrighteous are consigned to the *aionion* fire, which Scripture everywhere views as the agent of death and destruction. The parable leaves it altogether an

open question what change in the condition of these judged ones is to be effected by their future resurrection out of death. We have a right—yea, we are bound—to inquire from Scripture, whether there may not be liberating and benevolent features in the provision made through Christ for the restoration of another life to these countless myriads. If it be asked why, if there were any such purpose of mercy, the Lord does not here speak of it, we reply that it did not enter into His design to unfold to His disciples the meaning of this great purpose of resurrection until after He had Himself been raised. It is certain that they never preached the doctrine of endless torment for sinners in hell.

If it be said that any hope for the dead would take out of preaching its strongest motive, and emasculate Scripture of that life and death issue which it ever presents to men, we answer that we have no right to abate or conceal either side of Scripture testimony: and the gospel of the resurrection does neither. On the one side it emphasizes death as the wages of sin, making it a real destruction, not only of the body, but even of the soul in hell, and which can only be escaped by a believing union with Christ the conqueror of death. It emphasizes the destructive effects of sin, in that it shows that, where it is not renounced, the grace of God can find no other way to reach the sinner's case but by taking him all to pieces, and beginning with him anew. His present trial in life ends in failure: he and his works must be given over to the eternal fire. Here then is a terrible loss and doom from which he needs immediate salvation. Here is a decisive issue which can be met only here and now. This present treasure of life must be now saved or lost forever. But to go

beyond this, and say that not even the wisdom and power of God can find any way to take up the case of lost men after the death-sentence has been executed and judgment satisfied, is to misconceive the very first principle of the gospel, which is God's good tidings that He has circumvented even death, and found a way by which His grace can reach men after it has done its work. It cannot, indeed, lift unjust men at once to perfect life. It must still keep them under trial and judgment. The seeds of evil character must bear their bitter fruits. God's great law of life for them that do good, and of death for them that do ill, abides forever. It must be forever ill with the sinner. All this is true. But He has not so tied Himself down, —and surely no other power or necessity could do it—as to make it impossible for Him to do anything to bring men out of sinful character after, and by means of, death. On the other hand, the very object of redeeming them from death is that He may meet and take up their case again. This is the meaning of resurrection. This makes the gospel "glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." This unlocks the mystery of countless multitudes, suffered to go down to death in their sins and in ignorance of the great salvation. There is resurrection out of even the grave of eternal fire to which the Judge consigns the inhumane and unrighteous of "all the nations." And the men who preach about this judgment have no right to conceal it, or to misrepresent Him, who is not only the Arbiter but the Saviour of the world, and whose goodness and severity we are not to view apart, but as together entering into that word of God by which we are made wise unto salvation.

There was one point at which we were in full accord with the preacher; and that was that hell is not merely a future penalty. The man who does wrong, he said, kindles its fire here and now within him. We fully believe in hell. We believe that the destructive effects of sin begin here, and that they long outlast this present life. We believe that God's fire against sin must burn as long as sin lasts. But we believe also this word of Scripture,—"whose end is destruction." When destruction has been visited, the work of judgment is accomplished, and the way is cleared for the grace of God to come in and take up the case of these perished ones through a reconstruction. But no other way of salvation will be opened unto them but the one straight and narrow way. Nor will the recovery to another life make sure that all will enter upon it. The harvest law by which all God's fields of life are reaped—to every seed his own body—must compel some to begin their new trial in life greatly crippled and far down the scale, and hence with heavier risks. All this can and must be held, while at the same time the "much more" of grace conveyed in the provision to bring back to life the "all men" upon whom death passed must neither be denied nor concealed.

WHAT LOVE OFFERS YOU.

"Ye know God but as Lord, hence Lord his name with ye;
I feel him but as Love, and Love his name with me."

My child, it is not necessary to know much to please me, it is sufficient to love much. Speak to me as thou wouldst to a mother if she drew thee near to her. Are there any for whom thou wouldst pray to me? Repeat to me the

names of thy relations, thy friends; after each name add what thou wouldst have me do for them. Ask much, ask much. I love generous souls who forget themselves for others. Tell me of the poor whom thou wouldst relieve, the sick whom thou hast seen suffer, the sinners thou wouldst have converted; those who are alienated from thee, whose affection thou wouldst regain. For all say a fervent prayer. Remember that I have promised to hear all prayers that come from the heart, and is not that a prayer from the heart which is offered to those we love and who love us?

Are there graces thou wouldst ask for thyself? Write if thou wilt, a long list of all thou desirest, of all the needs of thy soul, and come and read it to me. Tell me simply how proud thou art, how sensitive, egotistical, mean and indolent, and ask me to come and help thee in all the efforts thou makest against it. Poor child, do not blush, there are in heaven many saints who had thy faults; they prayed to me, and little by little their faults were corrected. Do not hesitate to ask me for blessings for the body and mind, for health, memory, success; I can give all things, and I always give when blessings are needed, to render souls more holy. To-day, what wilt thou have my child? If thou knewest how I long to do thee good! Hast thou plans which occupy thee? Lay them all before me. Do they concern thy vocation? What dost thou desire? Dost thou wish to give pleasure to thy mother, to thy family, to those on whom thou dost depend? What wouldst thou do for them? And for me, hast thou no zealous thought for me? Dost thou not wish to do a little good to the souls of thy friends whom thou lovest, and who

have perhaps forgotten me? Tell me in whom thou art interested, what motives move thee, what means thou wouldst employ. Whom dost thou wish interested in thy work? I am Master of hearts my child, and can lead them where I will. I will bring round thee all who will be necessary to thee. *Be tranquil!* Bring me all thy failures and I will show thee the cause of them. Hast thou not troubles? Oh, my child, tell them all to me, fully. Who has caused thee pain? Tell me all, and thou wilt finish by adding that "thou wilt pardon, thou wilt forget," and I will bless thee.

Dost thou dread something painful? Is there in thy heart vain fear which is not reasonable, but which is tormenting? Trust thyself wholly to my care. I am here. I see everything. I will not leave thee.

Hast thou not joys to make known to me? Why dost thou not let me share thy happiness? Tell me what has happened since yesterday to cheer and console thee? Was it an unexpected visit which did thee good; a fear suddenly dissipated; a success thou thoughtest thou shouldst not reach; or mark of affection, a letter, a gift which thou hast received; a trial which left thee stronger than thou supposed? I have prepared it all for thee. Thou canst show thy gratitude and give me thanks. Hast thou promises to make to me? I can read the depths of thy heart. Thou knowest it—thou canst deceive man, but not God. Be, then, sincere.

Well, my child, go now, take up thy daily work; be silent, humble, submissive, kind, and come back to-morrow and bring me a heart still more devout and loving. To-morrow I shall have more blessings for thee.—*Selected.*

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

It will be noticed that we advertise in this Number a new book, which is likely to excite a wide-spread interest. In it fifty writers, representing every phase of current thought upon the great question of man's future, give their views. Among them is the Editor of this Magazine, who contributes an article upon what he believes to be "The Solvent Principle" in this discussion. Any of our subscribers may order this work through this office. Any new subscribers who may wish to order it with "Words of Reconciliation," may have the Magazine free for six months, or for one year for fifty cents.

The Presbytery of Rochester.— We are indebted to a friend for a recent copy of the *Rochester Morning Herald*, giving an account of the discussion in that Presbytery over the right of elders at ordination to make reservations in their assent to the Confession of Faith. It appears that three newly-elected elders would only consent to serve on condition that their subscription to the Confession should be understood as made subordinate to its own statement in Ch. xx, section 2, that "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in anything contrary to His Word." The existing session voted that "when ordained, they should be permitted to avail themselves of the liberty they believe to be described" in that section, and so made record in their minutes. When these minutes came before Presbytery for approval, exception was taken: hence the discussion. The pastor of the church, Dr. Millard, defended the action, and supported the new elders in their scruples at receiving the harsh statements of the Confession upon election and fore-ordination. Their doubts, he said, are shared by many other members of the Presbyterian church, and it was only a matter of time before the doctrines mentioned will be restated. Dr. Shaw, one of the oldest members of the body, said:

"It is a great relief to me to find what part of the confession of faith the elders objected to, for I am in the same boat with them. I do not, or did not before my ordination, believe in the damnation of infants or the awful doctrine of reprobation—that God brought men into this world to send them to hell. Yet I was thought sound enough to be ordained with these views. If the elders got in wrongfully then I was ordained wrongfully. You may rely upon it, some of the standards of the doctrines of the Presbyterian church have got to be restated. It's very singular that the bible itself can be revised, but that a man can't point his finger at the confession of faith without being held up to the scorn of the whole church."

SINGLE TEXTS.—Many people, in forming their opinions of the teachings of Scripture, give more weight to some one passage, which they deem decisive, than to the general drift and teaching of the whole document. Such persons should remember Dr. A. A. Hodge's maxim, as uttered in one of his recent lectures: "It is never safe to build any important doctrine upon a single passage." Manuscripts and versions may not agree about it. It may have been tampered with, or be possibly an interpolation. The translation may not give the precise meaning. Where you find, however, a doctrine assumed or implied in the whole document, set forth in similitude and illustrated in history, and consonant with the whole scheme of revelation, and with what we know of its author, then we have the strongest reason for accepting it as true.

It is safe to say that the doctrine that resurrection, or the provision of another life for man beyond the grave, is redemptive and a boon to the whole race, meets these conditions. It is interwoven with all Scripture. And, therefore, the one text, Matt. xxv. 46, so often quoted, must yield its claim to decisiveness. It would be easier to believe that the Lord never uttered these words, as here recorded, than to set aside this "hope of the dead" as taught by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. And especially must we give it a second place in view of the fact that many of the best critics deny that the word rendered "eternal" means endless, and the fact that the word "punishment" in two of the oldest ver-

sions reads "fire," and the further fact that it is impossible to reconcile this consignment of sinners to the torment of an endless hell with the Bible's repeated assertion that "He will not keep His anger forever," and that with Him is plenteous redemption and a forgiving love that never wearies toward even the evil and the unthankful. The main trouble, however, will disappear when this text is rightly located and viewed not as a sentence inflicted upon men brought out of their graves, and who were before adjudged to death and hell, but upon men in flesh and blood—the living nations of mankind. This leaves the whole question open as to the effect of their future recall from this penal state of death, as provided for in the promise "In Christ shall all be made alive."

HUXLEY *vs.* HARRISON.—In the January number of the *Fortnightly Review*, Mr Frederick Harrison showed very satisfactorily what a dreary and lifeless substitute for Christianity Agnosticism offers. Believing, however, that Christianity bases itself on supernatural claims which the scientific instinct must reject, he undertakes to show the superiority of Positivism, and to claim that it must be the religion of the future. Professor Huxley in his recent article in the *Nineteenth Century*, shows what an impertinence is this claim, and what a pretense and sham this upstart religion of August Comte is. If Christianity is compelled to count both these able men as her foes, it is a satisfaction to know that she can sit calmly by and see them devour each other.

But let us hear Professor Huxley:

Whoso calls to mind what I may venture to call the bright side of Christianity; that ideal of manhood, with its strength and its patience; its justice and its pity for human frailty; its helpfulness to the extremity of self-sacrifice; its ethical purity and nobility; which apostles have pictured, in which armies of martyrs have placed their unshakable faith, and whence obscure men and women, like Catherine of Sienna and John Knox, have derived the courage to rebuke popes and kings, is not likely to underrate the importance of the Christian faith as a factor in human history, or to doubt that if that faith should

prove incompatible with our knowledge, or necessary want of knowledge, some other hypostasis of men's hopes, genuine enough and worthy enough to replace it, will arise. But that the incongruous mixture of bad science with eviscerated papistry, out of which Comte manufactured the positivist religion, will be the heir of the Christian ages, I have too much respect for the humanity of the future to believe . . . . When the positivist asks me to worship "Humanity"—that is to say, to adore the generalized conception of men as they ever have been and probably ever will be—I must reply that I could just as soon bow down and worship the generalized conception of a "wilderness of apes." Surely we are not going back to the days of paganism, when individual men were deified, and the hard good sense of a dying Vespasian could prompt the bitter jest, "Ut puto Deus fio." No divinity doth hedge a modern man, be he even a sovereign ruler. Nor is there anyone, except a municipal magistrate, who is officially declared worshipful. But if there is no spark of worship-worthy divinity in the individual twigs of humanity, whence comes that godlike splendor which the Moses of positivism fondly imagines to pervade the whole bush? . . . . The worship of a god who needs forgiveness and help, and deserves pity every hour of his existence, is no better than that of any other voluntarily selected fetish. The Emperor Julian's project was hopeful, in comparison with the prospects of the new Anthropolatry.

To put the matter briefly, M. Comte, finding Christianity and Science at daggers drawn, seems to have said to Science, "You find Christianity hollow at the core, do you? Well, I will scoop out the inside of it." And to Romanism: "You find Science mere dry light—cold and bare. Well, I will put your shell over it, and so, as schoolboys make a spectre out of a turnip and a tallow candle, behold the new religion of Humanity complete!"

THE NEW REFORMATION.—The same magazine gives us also an article on the "New Reformation," by Mrs. Humphrey Ward, the author of *Robert Elsmere.* She still would have us believe that the new criticism has denuded the Bible of its supernatural elements, and robbed the Christian of his faith in a risen Lord. All these three forms of infidelity agree in this. And yet neither provide us anything instead, but a temple, whether of Creation or of Humanity, with a vacant shrine, and in which every voice of prayer and praise must grow dumb, and every future hope fade out into rayless darkness. What is Christianity

without a Son of Man who passed through death to win for us sons of men a triumphant life beyond it? These wise people start out with an *a priori* assumption that the order of nature is so fixed and unvarying that no such miracle can have occurred. Hence, it is easy for them to take in all the evidence that unbelieving critics may accumulate against it. The Christian, however, has been led to see that even Professor Huxley's plan of creation would not be complete without this production of a first fruits of God's creatures, fitted to possess it and to fructify it with future harvests, and that Comte's ideal man becomes a mere grinning skeleton, unless there be a true Ideal Man who has passed through death as a Conqueror, and opened up a path to a future life for all His brother men. Let these empty faiths go on then in their work of mutual self-destruction. The Word and the Incarnate Word of our God liveth and abideth forever.

MENTAL RESERVATION.—In reference to the recent discussion in the Toronto Presbytery over the proposal to revise the Confession of Faith, a writer in the *Mail* asks, with great pertinence, how Presbyterian ministers can declaim against the Jesuits for their practice and defense of mental reservation, while at the same time they claim the right to accept their Confession only "for substance of doctrine." He says:

"If it is really so, as appears from the testimony of so many eminent Presbyterian divines, that many of them cannot conscientiously subscribe to the confession without qualification, why would it not be better to change the venerable creed than to change the terms of subscription? Suppose, as has been suggested, the terms of subscription should be so changed that the person subscribing to it would accept it only so far as it harmonized with the Word of God, what would there be to prevent a person who thought no part of it in harmony with the Word of God from subscribing to it? Clearly nothing. But nevertheless we are told that very many Presbyterian ministers do now subscribe to it—*i. e.*, with a mental reservation. And that reminds me that one of the great faults of the Jesuits is that they justify mental reservation, and none are more severe upon them than many of the leading Presbyterian ministers. I wonder the Jesuits do not turn upon them in this matter.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT.

A new work, that is already exciting profound interest among thoughtful minds, will shortly make its appearance in the reading world. Its title is "That Unknown Country." It will contain over fifty fresh contributions from the pens of as many of the most eminent living writers in both hemispheres, representing *all denominations*, besides a statement of the prevailing beliefs held by all peoples since the world began on the subject of "Man's Final Destiny," prepared by Prof. Geo. P. Fisher, of Yale University. He who thinks at all, cannot fail to ask the question, What is there for me beyond the grave? Our friends who die, whether believer, sceptic, or atheist, are still precious in our thoughts, and we often wonder what is their estate "beyond the veil." With Divine Revelation as the basis of truth and standard of interpretation, and with what light it sheds on human reason, minds the most gifted and scholarly have attempted the solution of this much-vexed problem of the age.

In these pages the staunchest advocates of the old theology vigorously defend the long-established faith of orthodoxy, while the views of the "Larger Hope" are set forth by the more liberal and advanced school of thought. The teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on this doctrine are ably expounded by Archbishop Manning, of London, Eng., and Rev. Dr. Hewitt, of New York. Among Presbyterians we note as contributors the names of Dr. Howard Crosby, New York, Dr. Talmage, Brooklyn, and Dr. Jos. T. Smith, of Baltimore. Methodist contributors: Bishops Fowler and Hendrix and Drs. Cummings and Buckley. Episcopalians: Bishop Huntington and Archdeacon Farrar, of England, and others. Baptists: Dr. Angus, of London, and Dr. MacArthur, New York. Congregationalists: Washington Gladden, D. D., Lyman Abbott, D.D., Pres. Bartlett, Dartmouth College. Swedenborgian: Dr. Chauncey Giles. Unitarian: Ed. Everett Hale, Boston. Universalist: Rev. Dr. Miner, Boston, besides many eminent Professors in various Theological Seminaries, among whom we see Prof. Fisher, of Yale University; Prof. Legge, of Oxford, Eng.; Profs. Poole and Davids, of London, and Swing, of Chicago, and others, eminent as pastors of prominent independent churches in America. Rev. E. White, of London, contributes an excellent paper on "Conditional Immortality," and Dr. Summerbell, of Milford, N. J., writes for the Christian Church, while the peculiar views of the Jews are set forth by Dr. Isaacs, of the *Jewish Messenger*, New York.

Thus from all points of view is presented in this unique contribution to the literature of this subject every representative type of opinion. Additional interest and attractiveness is given to each article by a full-page steel engraving of its author.

The entire work will contain over 900 royal octavo pages, will be complete in one volume, and will be sold for $3.75, best cloth binding, $4.50 half Russian, and $5.50 full seal binding.

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WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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UNKNOWN ELEMENTS.

While stoutly contending for the principle that Resurrection is redemptive, our readers will bear witness that we have never claimed to be able to apply it to the full solution of every one of the hard problems of the future. We are satisfied that the solution is imbedded in this principle, although we may not always be able to discover it. And this is due, not only to the necessary limitation of our powers, but also to certain unknown elements in the problem which must remain hidden until "that which is perfect is come."

These elements relate to the time, the place, and the manner of the resurrection of the unjust. They include also the question as to what constitutes personality, how far embodiment is necessary to personal self-conciousness, and the nature and extent of that destruction of man's being which is the result of death, the wages of his sin.

As to the resurrection of the saints, we are plainly taught that it is begun even in this life, that the change which passes upon them at death is but a stage in the process of it, and that it is consummated by their complete investiture

with that form of glorified humanity in which Jesus was raised, and which St. Paul defines as "the image of the heavenly." We are taught also that all other men pass at death into a state of privation and bondage, for which the Old Testament name was "sheol," in which they remain until the voice of the Son of God shall bid them come forth. The harvest law of life by which men must reap as they have sown requires that this banishment from light and life be intensified and prolonged according to character, and that every man be raised "in his own order." And as such cannot be raised in the likeness of the heavenly manhood, they must come forth again in the only other form of manhood of which Scripture makes mention—"the image of the earthy." They must come back to life therefore under bondage to the creature, subject to its law of change and corruption and under the yoke of its trials and temptations. We are taught also that their resurrection will be a process of strict discrimination and sorting, both as to the time and the degree of the deliverance it brings. Just and humane men of every nation—who are not to be confounded with the saint-class already risen with Christ—will have such recompense and emancipation in their recovery as will make their resurrection to be "of life:" while the unjust must be held in such restraint as will make their resurrection one "of judgment." (John v: 29). It is manifest that every requirement of God's unchanging law—"according to deeds done"—can be thus met, by this previous exaction of sin's wages in the prison-house of death, and this graded liberation to a plane of existence which makes life still a discipline, its prizes open only to those who worthily seek them, and the disobedient still

under the peril of a second death. Such a view of the future harmonizes the teachings of Scripture with our profoundest knowledge of the laws of life as drawn from the teachings of science, or of the best systems of philosophy and religion in which the human race has sought to embody its deepest instincts and convictions. And it is profoundly true to what both Scripture and reason teach us concerning the character of God.

And yet there remain the unknown elements to which we have referred. Whether the re-incarnation of imperfect souls for further trial and discipline is to take place on the earth or in some other place in the universe, whether it even may not now be going on before our eyes, or whether it is all deferred until after some great change in the existing cosmos; whether the loss and damage of the sinful soul by death may not bring with it such "loss of self" as involves loss of personal self-consciousness; whether, as Canon Westcott intimates in the quotation made from him in our last number (p. 245), and as we believe, the Christian church has not been wholly misled on this subject by substituting for "the fullness of the Christian creed concerning resurrection the purely philosophic conception of an immortality of the soul which destroys the idea of the continuance of our distinct personal existence," all these are matters upon which we must get further light before we can answer all difficulties that arise in the adjustment of the doctrine of future punishment to this great principle of redeeming grace, that "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive; but every man in his own order." Of one thing we may be sure: there is nothing in this doctrine which

gives any man encouragement to continue in sin that grace may abound. For it knows of no salvation which does not require the utter burning up by God's consuming fire of this body of sin and death in which wicked men take their pleasure, and which does not leave such men stripped and bound for even the new race of life His grace confers on them. But at the same time this doctrine shows how God is unchanging in His grace, as in His righteousness, from age to age, and that He is the same, yesterday, to-day and forever. It shows, too, how He has not shut Himself up in this system of creation within limits which leave no room for the operation of His grace beyond the region of its inexorable laws. These laws tend to the inevitable fixity of character and the consequent remediless destruction of all who violate them. But the whole order of redemption is His transcendence of this system, compelling its inexorable laws to work out a remedy for the suffering and death they require, finding, out of their destruction, a way to reconstruct—a resurrection out of death. This question is after all the fundamental one of Christianity, whether the devil—"the prince of this cosmos" (Jno. xv. 30)—is the permanent master in this system of creation, grinding down its creatures into hopeless mire and death through its unrelenting laws, or whether the glorified Son of Man is its rightful heir and Lord, ordained to lift the race of which He is the head above the tyranny of these laws into that region of freedom in which man shall have free-will, not as now in name, but a real freedom to conform his will to that eternal will of God by which alone the creature can find happiness and eternal life.

DEVIL WORSHIP.

Even Presbyterian ministers in good and regular standing will do some thinking for themselves. One such remarked to us not long since that the conception which large numbers of Christians have formed of God, and which they worship as God, answers better to that of the devil. They have formed this conception from what they see of the unchanging character of Nature's laws. Their God is the Supreme Force in this unchanging system of forces; hence their corollaries as to the fixity of character and the certainty and inexorableness of future punishment. The Westminster theology easily affiliates with this conception of an unrelenting God, sovereign in a vast and stolid system by whose laws all things and all men reach their predetermined destiny.

Now the one fatal objection to this view of God as drawn from the fixed order of nature, is that the Bible represents Him as transcending this present natural system, and as in a sense at war with it. The devil is declared to be "the prince of this cosmos." Men were forbidden in the second commandment to seek for any likeness of God in any of its creature forms. The essence of idolatry is its slavish submission to the creature, as if it were God. The whole question of redemption was whether God would find a way to emancipate man from this grinding bondage to the creature, and to defeat the operation of its inexorable and tyrannous laws. The incarnation of His Son, which was His voluntary humiliation under its cruel yoke, and His passage out from under it through death and resurrection, by which he spoiled its principalities and powers and cast

out its prince, was God's answer to this great question. It was the destruction of the devil and all his works. It kindled "the fire prepared for the devil and his angels" by which the creation is to be set free from its long bondage to corruption. As the question has been thus forever settled, whether an unrelenting law of Nature or whether God is supreme over all, so we are to be careful lest we form our idea of God out of such traces as we find of Him in creation, instead of seeking it in the face of Jesus Christ. To make nature supreme is to deify the devil. To assert that she must and will always have her way is to make him sovereign, and to blind ourselves to the fact that the Son of God was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil and that, to this end, He is now exalted far above all principalities and powers to reign until all enemies are put under His feet. Many Christians take such low views of the power of His resurrection and the scope of His redemption as virtually leave the devil the master in this created system, or at least leave him with a divided empire in it to all eternity. Let us beware lest we unconsciously allow our ideas of God to be marred and debased by ideas really drawn from the kingdom of this world's prince. The whole question between Christianity and Anti-Christianity may be narrowed down to this question of finding our God in this cosmical system, or in the realm of redeeming grace which transcends its fixed laws, and which provides that even the present heavens and earth must pass away before the coming of that new order from which the devil shall be forever cast out, and in which there shall be no more curse. It would be easy to show how such a book as "Natural Law in the Spiritual World" falls into this

grave mistake of making the unchanging law of this cosmos the law within whose limits even God is bound. The God who made all things, a subject in a system of which the devil is the prince! No power of redemption working to lift up man from under the yoke of this cosmos! Such is the conception of God wrought out for us by the so-called scientific mind. Its warnings are indeed terrific, but it destroys all hope and crowds back the gospel. "Science is intensely Calvinistic," we were frequently told at the Centennial of Presbyterianism held in this city a year ago. No doubt there is the "Reign of Law" through the whole system of Nature, and that this reign is unswerving and unpitying. But who is the prince in this stern system? The Bible answers, the devil. We must look beyond it therefore to find the true idea of God. The resurrection of Jesus Christ broke through, and will finally and forever break up this yoke. And it is only as men come to learn what gospel for the world of mankind, and even for the whole creation, there is in this great fact of resurrection, that they can come to the true knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent, which is life eternal. No doubt the rule of this world's prince is but a wheel within the wheel of God's universal administration, who is God over all, blessed forever, and that the eyes of His providence pervade it all. But let us beware lest we allow this usurped and temporary sovereignty of Satan to so fill our thoughts as to blind us to that larger Kingdom of God which is working beneath it to overthrow it, and to strip it of its spoils upon the very theatre of its apparently long and undisputed triumph.

SOME HARD QUESTIONS.

The current doctrine that every man's destiny is fixed at death for everlasting happiness or woe, is confronted with these hard questions, for which it cannot possibly find a satisfying answer.

1. Why was no revelation made of this doctrine for thousands of years even to God's chosen people to whom He gave a revelation of His will? Can it be possible that this surpassingly important issue was impending in the case of every human soul, and not a word about it in the record we have of Jehovah's communications to the patriarchs, to Moses, and not a plain word in the Psalms and the prophets? Would a God of love, a Heavenly Father, have prepared such a fate for His children, and left them so long in ignorance of it? If this doctrine is essential in religion to stimulate good men to fidelity, to hold bad men within proper restraints and to furnish them motives to repentance, why this Old Testament silence upon it? Is there any more use for it now than there was then?

2. If there be no possible hope beyond death for any of the unnumbered masses of the human race who have died in their sins, how can God make good His primary and repeated promises to bless through a chosen seed all the families of the earth?

4. If unregenerate men are forever to be shut up in death and hell beyond all hope, how can such promises to an Ephraim joined to his idols, an Israel who had destroyed himself, as are given in Hosea, be verified; or what is the meaning of the promise (xiii, 14) "I will

ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, where are thy plagues? O grave, where is thy destruction?"

5. If there be no blessing beyond death for Israel, scattered and peeled for their sins, what is the meaning of such passages as Ezekiel xxxvii, Jeremiah xxxii, xxxiii, and specially what does the Lord mean when, in answer to Israel's complaint that they were "clean cut off" and all their hopes defeated, He gives His prophet a vision of a host of dead men raised to life again, and declares "Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves?"

6. If sinners of the Gentiles are also all lost beyond any recovery, what is the meaning of the promise to restore Samaria and Sodom to their former estate (Ezek. xvi, 53–63), and to bless them in the future with Israel? and from what other captivity than that of death can such peoples as Assyria, and Moab, and Ammon, and Elam be restored? (Jeremiah xlix, 6, 39, etc.)

7. If death be the wages of sin, and if hades be its prison-house in which those who died in sin are held captive, what motive of either righteousness or of grace can there be in God's provision to raise these multitudes of captives from the dead?

We charge this old doctrine not only with ignorance of, but with utter perversion of the Scriptures "touching the hope and resurrection of the dead."

Is not the resurrection of all mankind due to the fact that Christ tasted death for every man? If so, can it be in any case merely a curse?

THE SUBSTITUTE.

What is the precise substitute we propose for the long-accepted doctrine of endless punishment? Briefly it is one in which the destinies of men are fixed by God's great law of life, which, for all imperfect life, is a law of both death and resurrection.

It is the law of creation as well as the revealed law of God that all imperfect forms of life must perish. Life is degraded by sin. The greater the sin, therefore, the more does human life become subject to the law of suffering and death, and the more severe its penalties. Instead, therefore, of a doom of endless punishment, foisted into theology as the result of a false assumption that man is inherently immortal, we would restore to its rightful place the Scripture doctrine of death as the wages of sin. We find in the degradation and final dissolution of man's being the proper penalty of his sin. This destruction is more than the death of the body. The soul survives that catastrophe, but it also is perishable and may be destroyed in hell. Hell is this pit of destruction down into which sin thrusts its votaries. And it is not something that awaits a distant resurrection and day of judgment. This destruction is immediate, and it is irrevocable in its effects upon the whole evil fabric into which any human life has developed and in which it is embodied. The whole body of it is destroyed in hell. This is what Jesus refers to as the "loss of self" (Luke ix, 25). It is the loss of all that heritage of life in manhood with which it was endowed and all its accumulated estate.

But this is but half of the great law of life, which pro-

vides also for reconstruction out of destruction, for resurrection out of death. Resurrection is a process of renewal, but also of rejection and of conservation. A life may be stripped and denuded by death, but it may again emerge in another form with whatever there was worth saving about the former life retained, and the rest cast away. Definitely we have antagonized the old eschatology just at this point of the purpose of God in providing for resurrection. It affirmed that it was a double damnation. We affirm that damnation in death and hell must already have been visited, and that resurrection is recovery, and for purposes of further trial and discipline. We insist that it must proceed, both as to the time and degree of its deliverance, according to the law of deeds done, and that no other path to eternal life will ever be opened than the strait and narrow one of absolute conformity to the will of God, and that no such plane of righteousness can ever be reached by any man except as Christ is formed in him.

Briefly, then, we interpret all the Scripture warnings about being cast into hell as relating to that destruction which awaits sinful men before resurrection. This enables us to hold consistently to what both Scripture and reason, and even science, teach as to the nature of resurrection—that it was never meant to be a curse but a boon. It is a perversion of the gospel to represent this crowning and triumphant provision of the grace of God in Christ as ever a curse to any man. It is true, indeed, that His law of life requires that men be sorted and judged by it. Those who now yield up their body of sin to be destroyed in the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire which Jesus came to effect, pass at once out of death into life and are

raised with Christ. Those who, even in heathen lands, like Cornelius, do good and work righteousness shall come forth to "the resurrection of the just," which is defined to be "of life," because it shall set them free to tread the path of life which leads to God's presence. Other men will enter upon their new existence emancipated or degraded and fettered by bondage to the creature according to character and to what they are fitted for. And such must be kept under judgment and be in peril of the second death. But to all men resurrection is a release from the prison-house of death and hell. New existence, even under bonds, is better than to remain in the bonds of death. Resurrection is the result of the ransom given for all, and is that special grace brought through the Conquering Seed by whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

It is manifest, therefore, that this doctrine provides for all the future punishment, both in intensity and duration, the case of the most hardened sinner demands. It gives an intelligible and rational meaning to all the Scripture teaching concerning death and hell. It gives a good practical, working doctrine of future punishment, which neither dazes men into stolidity by its inconceivable magnitude, nor encourages them to continue in sin that grace may abound. And at the same time it preserves unimpaired all the Scripture doctrine concerning Jesus as the only Saviour from sin, and all the evangelical motives to immediate faith in and submission to Him as the only way of escape from present sin and evil, and from the wrath to come. And it preserves in symmetry that outline of God's character in which Scripture clearly sets Him

forth, as the righteous Judge and yet the loving Father, as the same God of Justice and of Love in this world and in all worlds, as always burning towards sinners as a consuming fire, and yet with a fire of love that would consume their evil selves without utterly consuming *them*, and that is ever ready to save them out of the fires their sins have kindled against them. In short this doctrine presents the only reconciliation between His judgments which are a great deep, and His love which is also an ocean without bottom and without shore—passing knowledge "for it filleth all the fullness of God."

THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS.

We could scarcely have imagined that in a little more than a year after we were advised by a court in the Presbyterian Church that we ought to cease our criticisms upon its Standards or withdraw from it, that that Church should be found on the eve of an eventful discussion over these Standards, and that one of the professors in one of their most important theological seminaries should put forth such an arraignment of the present position of that church as we find in the *Independent* of July 25th, from the pen of the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D. Nothing could more fully prove the propriety of the effort we made three years ago to induce the Presbytery to take up the subject. We wish we had room for the article at length. We append, however, copious extracts.

The difficulty with the Presbyterian Church in the United States at the present time is that ministry and people have

drifted away from the Westminster Standards. This drift is very plain to any one who will undertake to measure the doctrines and practices of the leading divines of the present day with the doctrines of the Westminster divines.

It has come to pass that the Presbyterian people, as a people, no longer adhere to the Westminster Confession. They do not understand its hard doctrines, they do not know of them, and when their attention is called to them they are astonished at them and troubled with them. The people are calling for relief!

The difficulty is increased in those who are candidates for elders and deacons. It is necessary that these office-bearers should subscribe to the Westminster Confession. Many of them have little knowledge of the Confession until they are chosen by the people for these offices. They then examine the doctrines to which they are asked to subscribe with amazement, and many of them are troubled with doctrines and expressions that are unfamiliar to them. Their scruples may ordinarily be overcome by the counsels of their pastors. But large numbers who have the gifts and qualifications and seem to have the call of God to the offices of deacon and elder are debarred from these offices by the hard doctrines and severe expressions of the Confession of Faith. In Scotland the elders have long been demanding release from the terms of subscription, and the Established Church has the matter now under consideration. Presbyterian elders and deacons in the United States are calling for relief.

The Church depends largely upon the trained young men of the colleges for its supply of ministers. The radical difficulty with the young men in colleges is subscription to the Westminster Standards. When the call to the ministry is urged upon them, they are confronted with the question whether they can sincerely adopt the Westminster Confession and assume the ordination vows of a Presbyterian minister. They hesitate to become candidates in a Church which seems to them to compel men to an iron-clad creed and to discourage theological research and Christian liberty. The young men in Presby-

terian colleges who are looking forward to the ministry are calling for relief.

Theological students who have entered upon their course of study in preparation for the ministry are involved in the intricate discussions of Christian Theology. They are brought face to face with all the difficulties and objections. They learn how hard the doctrines are and how difficult they are to explain. They see the vast advance that has been made in Biblical Theology and Historical Theology, and the numerous improvements that have been made in Practical Theology. The question is forced upon them, Why should Dogmatic Theology remain stationary? Why should the Westminster divines revise the XXXIX Articles of the Church of England and make a new creed that should keep the Presbyterian Church in bondage for two hundred and fifty years. There can be little doubt that a considerable percentage of Presbyterian young men after they have been trained in Presbyterian theological seminaries turn away from the Presbyterian ministry and either go into other denominations where greater liberty is allowed or else abandon the ministry altogether. Presbyterian theological students ask for relief.

The ministry of the Presbyterian Church do not find their subscription vows an easy yoke. The difficulties that have confronted them in college and seminary do not decrease; they rather increase in number and complexity. The ministers are troubled also by the difficulties of their people and office-bearers which they cannot remove. They are unable to preach the doctrines of the Standards because the people will not listen to them. If they persist they are politely requested to retire from their charges. They preach no longer the hard doctrines of the Standards; they preach the Scriptures or else sermons for the times. The experience of a Presbyterian minister does not bring him closer to the Standards of his Church, but rather it increases his difference from them.

The troubled minister seeks relief in several ways. He studies the dogmatic system; he renews his course in systematic theology. This gives relief to few; it ordinarily increases the

perplexities. Many seek comfort in the line of battle for the faith; apologetics is the favorite study. They think that they are doing God service by battling against Science, Philosophy, Socialism, Biblical Criticism and the New Theology. Others give up dogmatics and apologetics with disgust, and bury themselves in the devotional study of the Scriptures and consume their energies in practical Christian work. But it is useless to turn away from the doctrines of the Confession; they are the standards of the denomination to which the minister subscribes, and he must from time to time measure his conformity with them. The question will press itself upon him whether he can honestly subscribe or not. There can be little doubt that some of the noblest of the Presbyterian ministry, men with tender consciences, with noble ideals and with manly courage and honesty, are departing from the Presbyterian Church; and their place is supplied by men of less tender consciences and with fewer scruples, who come from other denominations. By loose and various interpretations of the terms of subscription many Presbyterian ministers remain in the Church, taking the liberty to differ from the Confession wherever it suits them to differ. Certainly the authority of the Westminster Confession does not gain by such subscription as this. It works confusion and disorder, and many thinking ministers on this very account desire relief from the inevitable chaos if such irregular subscription is to continue in the Church. * * * *

There are grave difficulties in the minds of many at the present time with regard to the future life. Dr. Archibald Alexander and his pupil, Charles Hodge, led the Presbyterian Church to reject the Westminster doctrine of "elect infants" and to teach the universal salvation of infants; but neither of these divines give us any information how all infants are to be saved in harmony with the Westminster order of salvation. The Westminster system expressly excludes the salvation of the heathen, and asserts that

"They who have never heard the Gospel know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of Nature,

or the laws of that religion which they profess: neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Saviour only of his body the Church."

And yet there are few Presbyterians who do not recognize that at least some of the heathen are saved, while they confess that they do not see how to construct the doctrine of their salvation in accordance with the order of salvation laid down in the Westminster system, if that order is confined to this life. There are other Presbyterian ministers who look for relief in the unfolding of redemption in the middle state, or think that there is comfort in the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked. What right have those who have already departed from the Westminster system, as far as the universal salvation of infants and the salvation of some of the heathen, to set up the bars against further differences and additional relief from the hard doctrine of everlasting punishment to vast multitudes of our race? The word of the apostle should be heeded: "Wherefore art thou without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art, that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things."

It would not be difficult to point out other departures from the Westminster system. We have given a sufficient number of examples to show that there is a deep and irrepressible demand for relief throughout the Presbyterian Church. There are many of the people, of the elders and deacons as well as the ministers, who find the Westminster Confession a heavy burden for their consciences. The Conservatives are in as great trouble as the Progressives. Each party naturally thinks its departures innocent and tolerable however perilous and intolerable they may seem to others. On all sides, in all parties, the cry for relief is spreading.

A remarkable feature in this statement is its confession of departures in the church from its professed doctrine of the future life. It states, what we know to be true, that there are concealed conditionalists and second-probationists and even restorationists among the ministry

of that church. Indeed, we are sure that, if the truth were known, the present widespread discontent with these standards has its root just here, in their narrow and cruel eschatology. The complaints are as yet directed against the out-lying evils of the system. They must some day reach the seat of the trouble. The movement we made three years ago was directed against the heart of it, which lies in the false conception of the fundamental fact in the Christian faith, the resurrection of the dead, and which underlies and vitiates the whole system. To this heart of the trouble the present discussion will sooner or later have to come.

With strange inconsistency Professor Briggs follows this exhibit of the present attitude of the Church toward its standards with another paper in which he deprecates revision as the mode of relief, and advocates loose subscription and toleration. It may very likely be a hopeless task to undertake to revise these ancient formulas; it may be wiser to discard them altogether and to formulate a new creed. But, whether by revision or by a complete transformation, there can be no question about the propriety of the church's being perfectly honest in her authorized statements of the faith. In matters of such immense importance she is bound to be perfectly candid and truthful before God and man. There is no room here for a theory of loose subscription and evasion. Better make the creed short and plainly scriptural and catholic, or else give up altogether the idea of enforced subscription. No church should so shut itself up to any creed as to exclude further light. The best human formulas should be subject to occasional revision. The Church was first constituted on the

theory that the spirit of God would unfold to it more and more the knowledge of the truth, and room should always be made in it for this advancing light. We cannot but hope that God has ordered and will overrule the coming agitation of this grave question in the Presbyterian Church to the good of all the churches in the divided camp of Christendom, by leading them to examine anew the true ground of unity in the church, as not found in a consensus of doctrine, but in the participation of a common organic life in Christ, and that the prime duty of the whole body is to assert this unity and to put into exercise this organic life. It will then be seen that the deepest need of the Presbyterian Church is not to seek for a closer bond of unity within itself, but for some way of giving expression to that union in life which already exists, and by which all the members of the one body of Christ are made one in Him.

VALUE OF POSITIVE OPINIONS.

It was Sydney Smith (who was a keen observer of human affairs) who said that a great deal of talent is lost to the world for want of courage. A man who has the courage of his convictions, and is not afraid to avow them, is always a useful man so long as he stands inside the lines of sound morals and of legitimate human rights. Indeed when he gets somewhat outside those lines, he may still be useful by provoking thought and discussion that will drive him inside if he is an honest man, and that will at any rate prevent others from standing in a false position. The truth often suffers from stagnation, and needs to be stirred

up; it suffers less by discussion than by being let alone. Rubbing it makes it brighter just as it does with gold and silver and precious stones. Positive opinions beget opposition, of course; but the world and the church need them all the same. Those who are afraid to express them in behalf of truth can take the awful responsibility of silence; but truth will march forward without them. But where will they be when they see it marching on.

—*New York Evangelist.*

INTERCESSION.

"A frequent intercession with God, earnestly beseeching Him to forgive the sins of all mankind, to bless them with His providence, enlighten them with His spirit, and bring them to everlasting happiness, is the divinest exercise that the heart of man can be engaged in.

Be daily, therefore, on your knees in a solemn, deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in such forms, with such length, importunity, and earnestness as you use for yourself; and you will find all little, ill-natured passions die away, your heart grow great and generous, delighting in the common happiness of others, as you used only to delight in your own.

For he that daily prays to God, that all men may be happy in Heaven, takes the likeliest way to make him wish for and delight in their happiness on earth. And it is hardly possible for you to beseech and entreat God to make anyone happy in the highest enjoyments of His glory to all eternity, and yet be troubled to see him enjoy-

ing the much smaller gifts of God in this short and low state of human life.

When, therefore, you have once habituated your heart to a serious performance of this holy intercession you have done a great deal to render it incapable of spite and envy, and to make it naturally delight in the happiness of all mankind.

There is no principle of the heart that is more acceptable to God, than an universal fervent love to all mankind, wishing and praying for their happiness; because there is no principle of the heart that makes us more like God, who is love and goodness itself, and created all beings for their enjoyment of happiness."

WILLIAM LAW.

THE USE OF CREEDS.

We do not quite agree with the writer of the following communication as to the danger from the use of creeds, but there is so much in it with which we do agree that we give it at length. As the expression of a Presbyterian minister's views at this time it is significant and worthy of attention.

REV. L. C. BAKER:

DEAR BROTHER: Permit to express my hearty satisfaction with the continuance of your magazine. I like it truly very much, though I dissent from some of its points, as you well know.

I do agree with you that the present efforts to revise the Confession of Faith do not really touch the root of error in our confession, for the contemplated change would most likely only deliver us into the Arminian camp, which is

also full of errors, for Arminians as well as Calvinists are *driven* to erroneous conclusions for the support of their system from the same cause, their fearful apprehension of the future, to which their view of resurrection commits them. The Calvinist tries to hush the cry and wounded feeling of man by an appeal to the sovereign power and will of God. The Arminian throws all on the free will of man; which, of course, is more satisfying to the natural mind, but does not give God all the glory that the Bible ascribes to him. But this stir for revision is nevertheless welcome, for conflict is better than false peace. Perhaps it will convince many that a confession of faith as a *rule* for faith is impossible to be obtained by imperfect and fallible men. Perhaps it will show some that we have denounced Rome for holding the traditions of men above the Bible, and that we are practically doing the same thing. Nominally we denounce the Pope, but practically we support him and walk in his steps. We have left Rome and have taken the Pope (the infallible) along into our new reformed domain. A confession of faith, *idolized* and upheld by the different churches as a bond of union for each division, is simply a *tower of Babel* with which to make a name, rising into heaven. But the plan is false and weak and will not succeed.

But must the Church have no confession of faith? Yes, but not in the *form* and for the *object* of the present confessions. The Church itself is a *living* confession of faith. Its teachers and members all profess the truths of the Bible as understood. All sermons from Peter's to those of our time are a confession of faith, all compilations of received truth by great authors are a confession of faith. But no one ever thinks of making these utterances of faith a *fixed rule*, whereby to compel the body of mankind to submission.

St. Peter's sermon is a part of inspiration, but all other sermons, utterances or deliverances of individual or collective bodies are subject to error, and cannot enforce belief.

The Church can only *testify* it cannot *command.* The light of truth needs no human power to push it on to success. Error can not either be crowded out by force, light will cause darkness to disappear without any roar of human drums. Let every individual believer *confess* and *defend* the given truth of the Bible, and let every individual be free to judge, if said confession or expression of truth is according to the Bible. It may be said, this will cause laxity and confusion. But God only can establish us in the truth. The Spirit is promised to lead (every individual) into all truth; He can make the Church to be of one heart and mind. All human efforts to this effect tend to trench upon personal liberty and to establish hierarchy. A *forced* communion divests the individual denominations of the high character of a *heavenly institution* and makes them only a human club, that exercises self-appointed rights. Your good efforts, dear Brother, for *reconciliation* of the different bodies of the Christian world, will not be realized until we all come down (?) or up to the Bible and reject all other bonds of union. The Bible, and nothing but the Bible, without any specifications will lead us to this glorious oneness, that Christ and all his true and free disciples desire.

Men will in their wisdom doctor the Bible by their specific explanations as to how we must receive it. Man's vanity and desire for power over his neighbor, are the cause of division and hierarchy. We are all but brethren and have only one Master, Christ. Let Him only speak and rule and we will realize the only oneness and unity of believers, that we can expect in this mortal state. We can never unite the whole Church of Christ in one Confession, however we may try, and revise and revise; for the Church must first be perfect, before she can speak perfectly.

Creed-making is therefore an effort to divide, rather than to *unite* the true body of Christ.

Creed-making is therefore the old, old question of the disciples on the way: "Who is greatest among us?" Christ did not encourage the inquiry, and He will never

encourage our efforts of making creeds that tend to divide His household. I would like to see the Confession of Faith revised so as to express the generally accepted belief of the Church of God. But this will be a hard thing to do. As long as we reckon with wrong premises, we will only cipher out wrong conclusions. I think the Church is altogether on a wrong path in the matter of creeds.

Creed-making is a symptom of Popery, in the ends for which creeds are now used.

If this radical error as to their use were purged from creeds, I would then not object to have them multiplied and *pruned* more and more. This is my simple and hearty opinion, for I plead also for *truth* and *unity*, and know that the truth alone can secure union. All other measures will fail.

A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER.

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

A NEW CHAPTER IN MISSIONS.—We have been much interested in the following account, which we clip from the *Ledger:*

WASHINGTON, August 28.—The Department of State has received from the Legation at Peking, China, under date of the 3d of July, an account of the death and extraordinary life-work of the Rev. J. Crossett, an independent American missionary in China. His career appears to have been a very remarkable one, characterized by absolute self-devotion. He died on the steamer El Dorado, en route from Shanghai to Tientsin, on the 21st of June last. He leaves a widow living at Schuylersville, N. Y. In speaking of Mr. Crossett, Minister Denby couples his name with that of Father Damien, the French missionary who lately died on the island of Molokai, and says:

"Mr. Crossett's life was devoted to doing good to the poorest classes of Chinese. He had charge of a winter refuge for the poor at Peking during several winters. He would go out in the streets the coldest nights and pick up destitute beggars and convey them to the refuge, where he provided them with food. He

also buried them at his own expense. He visited all the prisons, and often procured the privilege of removing the sick to his place of refuge. The officials had implicit confidence in him and allowed him to visit at pleasure all the prisons and charitable institutions. He was known by the Chinese as the 'Christian Buddha.' He was attached to no organization of men. He was a missionary pure and simple, devoted to charity rather than proselytism. He literally took Christ as his exemplar. He travelled all over China and the East. He took no care for his expenses. Food and lodging were voluntarily furnished him. Innkeepers would take no pay from him, and were ever glad to entertain him. It must be said that his wants were few. He wore the Chinese dress, had no regular meals, drank only water, and lived on fruit with a little rice or millet. He aimed at translating his ideal Christ into reality. He wore long auburn hair, parted in the middle, so as to resemble the pictures of Christ. Charitable people furnished him money for his refuge, and he never seemed to want for funds. He slept on a board or on the floor. Even in his last hours, being a deck passenger on the Eldorado, he refused to be transferred to the cabin, but the kindly captain, some hours before he died, removed him to a berth, where he died, still speaking of going to heaven, and entreating the bystanders to love the Lord.

"As an instance of the character of the man I will state that when on one occasion I gave my annual dinner on Thanksgiving Day to the Americans, Mr. Crossett wrote to me beseeching that I would have no dinner, but would give the cost to the poor. He attended the dinner, but touched nothing but water and rice.

"In theology he can hardly be said to have been orthodox. He found good in all religions. After a long conversation with him one day, I told him he was not a Christian, but a Buddhist. He answered that there were many good things in Buddhism.

"The last important work of Mr. Crossett was an effort to provide for the deaf and dumb. To further this project he travelled to Hankow and thence to Canton, establishing everywhere schools for these unfortunates. He was successful wherever he went.

"He completely sacrificed himself to the good of the poorest of the poor. He acted out his principles to the end. He was poor, and lived as plainly as the poorest of his patients. On charitable subjects he wrote well. The ideal to him was practical.

"Let this American, then, be enshrined, along with the devoted Frenchman, in the annals of men who loved their fellowmen."

Upon reading this narrative we were impressed, first, with the thought that our ordinary ideas of saintship seem poor indeed when judged in the light of such self-devotion as this; and secondly, with the fact that orthodoxy is not so essential to a good life as many of us have been accustomed to suppose. Here was a man standing outside of accepted systems and methods, deriving his ideal of Christian life directly from the study of our Lord's life and teaching, and finding it in harmony with all that is good in the less perfect forms of religious faith which dominate mankind. We are persuaded that the primitive and normal form of Christianity is much more in sympathy with all that is good and true in these imperfect systems, than are the conventional forms into which it has been developed. We have, in recent numbers, expressed the conviction that modern Christianity can learn something from even Buddhism as to the meaning of its own fundamental doctrine of resurrection, and as to the purpose of God in providing for the re-investiture of imperfect human souls with embodied life. Contrary to the whole drift of Scripture teaching upon the subject, theology has been drawn off into a conception of resurrection which makes it simply retribution and confirmed damnation. It has thus lost the true meaning of human life as a discipline, perverted the idea of divine justice, and robbed humanity of those human hopes, larger than any which the older religions had brought to the world, which made the mission and doctrine of Christ essentially a gospel. Even Buddhism's view of the future of mankind is more just, more merciful, more humane, than that of modern theology, and it certainly is more akin to the New Testament doctrine, which puts the future judgment of human souls, and their recall to life out of the pit of death and hell to which their sins consign them, into the hands of a *Redeeming* Messiah, whose very office it is to strip death of its spoils, and who, we may be sure, has provided to recover all men to another life for some more wise and merciful purpose than simply to thrust them back into a deeper pit of hell without any further trial and discipline. And we are quite sure also that this view of humanity, which refuses to be-

lieve that death closes forever against it every door of hope, and which regards it as always in the hands of an unchanging God of Justice and of Love, is calculated to develop in the Christian a more sympathetic and humane and self-sacrificing devotion to the welfare of his brother-men, and to their recovery from their one great enemy, sin, than is possible under the fitful and arbitrary system of so-called Christianity, with its monstrous exaggeration of God's justice over against His love, and which confines all His effort for the sinner's welfare to the brief and adverse opportunities of this present life. We should like to have talked to this "Christian Buddha," and to have found out just at what points he was taught of God to reject the conclusions of dogmatic Christianity, and what of truth he found in Buddhism. We are convinced that a main point would have been the attitude of God toward human souls, as the same in all worlds, and the beneficent character of that great provision in this realm of created life by which even fallen and imperfect souls, who must inevitably meet the consequences of their sins in death, have been redeemed from death to another opportunity in life. We solemnly believe that the great want in the church to-day, in her work at home, and even more in her missions abroad, is a new conception of the gospel with which she has been put in trust, derived from a larger view of the foundation truth of that gospel which teaches that, "as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive; *but every man in his own order.*"

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Presbyterian*, referring to the recent session of the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland, says:

In the Moderator's closing address he said every form of knowledge is progressing, whether human or divine. He affirmed that in the present state of theological views, they required a great theologian to arise to give a full view of gospel truth, to grasp it in its entirety, embracing all the three phases of Christianity, and promulgating a theology more rational than that of Catholicism, more human than that of Calvinism and

more divine than that of Arminianism, and who, like Luther, would embody in his person the spirit of his age, and like him bring forth some regenerating truth from obscurity in which it had been buried for ages, and wield that truth by the overpowering force of eloquence, combined by the mighty rushing wind of the Spirit, and carry all before him.

We have frequently expressed the opinion that such a "full view of the gospel" and such "regenerating truth now hidden in obscurity" is contained in the gospel of the resurrection. We too are longing and praying for the time when some tongue and pen of fire shall give it worthy utterance.

MR. A. C. JONES, U. S. Consul at Chinkiang, China, in a report to the State Department at Washington respecting a recent visit to Nanking, speaks thus of the results of missionary labor in that city:

"The different sects of missionaries and their hostility to each and all others have a confusing effect on the mind of the heathen, and induce him to stick to his original gods."

This is very likely a partial statement, but there is enough of truth in it to confirm what we have said, as to how impossible it is that a Christianity that has not enough of the Spirit of Christ in it to compose its own differences can ever conquer the world for HIM.

ROBERTSON'S SERMONS.—A friend has written to us, calling attention to one of this eminent preacher's sermons upon "Salvation out of the Visible Church." We are aware of the great influence that has been exerted upon modern Christian thought by Robertson's Sermons, and that they deservedly hold high place among the influences that have widened the horizon of the Church's hope for the human race. Neither Robertson nor his many followers, however, have been able to give us a clear and definite ground for this hope because it has not been plainly connected in their minds with the scriptural "hope of the dead" through resurrection. Hence they have based this hope rather upon a lower view of the terms of salvation, than upon the opportunities that may be afforded in a future life to fulfil

those terms. Scripture tells us that even Cornelius needed to hear from Peter the words by which he should be saved (Acts xi, 14). In lieu then of the prevalent view of the larger hope which opens the door of salvation wide enough to admit all piously disposed people of every nation, we prefer to hold to the word of our Saviour that the way is narrow, and to find in His declared purpose to raise all from the dead and to reward all according to their works a fuller opportunity for such men to enter upon it. Confused thought upon this subject is very much due to men's confused thoughts about "Salvation." If by salvation is meant the entrance upon eternal life in that form of glorified manhood in which Jesus was raised, then it is a blessing confined not only to the visible church, but to an elect body within the church who are indeed saints. But there is an universal salvation from death in which all men share. Hence, Scripture speaks of "the grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men," and of Christ as "the Saviour of all men." It also teaches that the plane of life and blessing upon which men shall enter this life to come will be according to character. Here, then, is provided for good men of every nation such recompense and opportunity of knowing God in Christ, as shall prove that He "is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to Him."

THE REV. ALLEN MACY DULLES, in the *N. Y. Evangelist*, asks very justly:

"Is that a living Confession whose great doctrine has not been preached for a generation? In my life I never heard a sermon on Election, nor one on Eternal Punishment, except when I myself have preached on these themes. Is that a Church Confession of which we deliberately say, as is constantly said, that no Church Member need assent to it? With all possible earnestness, I for one would beg for such a Confession as every Presbyterian minister *can and must preach, and every hearer believe.*

In the name of everything that is sacred, let us recognize and remove the gap that now exists between Confession and Church. It is not a question what you or I may believe, but what the Church believes. Once our Confession lived. It was not rele-

gated to a dusty shelf. It burned its way from the living preacher's brain to the hearer's heart. Shall we ignore the fact that this is no more the case? Let us remove this stigma of inconsistency, and either require every minister to preach the Confession, or let us have a Confession which they now preach."

A TRANSITION PERIOD.—Professor Briggs in the *Independent* of August 1st, says:

We are passing through a transition period in Theology, and no one can tell what will be the doctrines of the next century. It is probable that a period of great theological conflict is upon us. The battle will result in new definitions of the Faith, and a new creed will spring forth from the victories of divine truth. No good creed was ever made in cold blood.

If the Presbyterian Church is to construct a new creed to harmonize all its parties, why should it enter upon this work alone? We have to consider the possibilities of a Federal Union or Confederation of all the Reformed Churches. Would it not be wiser and safer to leave the new creed for such a Federal Union? Moreover, the spirit of unity is abroad, and there are possibilities of a reunion of some kind in which all Protestant bodies will share. The irenic movement is advancing more rapidly than the polemic, and will probably envelop it and absorb it. Such a united Protestantism will need a new creed to express the common faith. It is probable that new doctrinal standards in the Presbyterian Church would hinder rather than forward the advance toward Reunion."

We are glad to see that his opposition to Revision arises largely from a conviction that something more radical than mere amendment of the old standards is really needed, and that the Church is moving forward toward that larger light which shall fit her for that more perfect union for which her Lord prayed.

As to the coming conflict of which he speaks there is no doubt, as we have elsewhere indicated, that it must wage around the great question of the future life, affecting as it does our view of the whole plan of redemption. The vital question is not whether the grace of God toward men has been limited by his own sovereign decree, or by the conditions imposed by man's free agency, but to what extent it is limited and defeated by death, and what is the meaning and scope of that triumph

over death won for man by Him who died for us and rose again. So long as the meaning of that triumph is obscured and narrowed in the Church, so long she will be cramped into sects. The impending conflict in the Presbyterian Church and in other churches is but the means by which God is leading us out into a larger knowledge of this prime verity of the Christian faith, the resurrection from the dead, and of its bearings both upon the world at large and upon her own position as a body called out from the world as a royal priesthood for the world's salvation.

NEED OF RELIEF.—That our original contention, that large numbers of the ministry and membership of the Presbyterian Church are no longer sincerely loyal to its hard doctrine of the future state, and that the time had come for re-investigation and re-statement, was justified, is plainly implied in the admissions of Professor Briggs' article quoted on another page, and also in the following, which we clip from his article of August 1st:

It is without doubt that a large majority of the Church believe in the contra-confessional doctrines of the salvation of *all* infants and *some* of the heathen. It is probable that the phrase "*elect* infants" might by a majority vote be removed from the Standards; and the section declaring against the salvation of the heathen might be blotted out. But those who think that relief is needed in the doctrine of the Middle State or in conditional immortality would hesitate to grant relief to those who would be unwilling to grant relief to them.

It will be clear that relief is demanded in some cases by a minority and in others by a majority of the Presbyterian Church in at least thirteen chapters of the Confession of Faith.

THE REV. HENRY J. VANDYKE, D. D., in urging revision, writes:

It is a sad fact and a grief to many hearts beside my own, that our Confession does not contain one declaration of the infinite love of God to man, nor one declaration of what every Presbyterian, old school or new, devoutly believes, that Christ's sacrifice for sin is sufficient for all, adapted to all, and offered to all.

THE REV. R. V. LYON, of Suspension Bridge, N. Y., has sent us a pamphlet in which he takes a view of the scope of redemption similar to our own, and of resurrection as related to it. He also agrees with us in believing that a portion of mankind may so harden themselves against the grace of God as to fail of forgiveness either in this world or the world to come. But all of this class he regards as belonging to an alien race—a serpent seed that never would have been born of the human race "if sin had not been introduced into the world,—a surplus seed." This corrupt stock he believes are not embraced in the plan of redemption; hence they have no resurrection, but utterly perish.

The resurrection of unregenerate portions of mankind is plainly foreshadowed in the Old Testament (e. g. Hos. xiii), and distinctly taught in the New. The difficulty is to reconcile the doctrine of the destruction of the wicked with this doctrine of their resurrection.

This pamphlet cuts the knot by denying to this portion of the human race—the seed of the serpent—any place in the purposes of redemption or in resurrection. Certainly the ungodly can never be raised *as such.* But it is not necessary to deny to them any part in the great human family who were to be blessed through a chosen seed. The question still recurs, whether after their destruction *in that character* as of the old Adam, involving a loss of the life treasures pertaining to it, and perhaps of their personal self-consciousness, referred to by Jesus as the "loss of self," they may not be raised again in another form of manhood, stripped and spoiled indeed of what belonged to their former selves, but not extinct. The degree of penalty for their sins would thus be measured by the degree to which they would experience this loss of self, with the accumulated treasure of their former lives. The Christian, of course, does not lose his soul, nor *himself,* but finds, according to his fidelity, the treasures of his life laid up in heaven, and awaiting his eternal possession and enjoyment of them.

SPECIAL OFFER.—Some of our subscribers have written to inquire upon what terms we can furnish the book "That Unknown Country." The fixed price of the book is $3.75. We can order it sent to any address for this price. Or, for $4.00 we will send this magazine for one year with the book, to either a new or an old subscriber.

WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

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SOME PROOF TEXTS EXAMINED.

The darkest statements, without doubt, of the Westminster Confession are those found in Chapter xxxiii, and in the Larger Catechism, Questions 29 and 89, where we read that the souls of the wicked are at death cast into the torments of hell, and that after resurrection they are again sentenced to be "cast into eternal torments," to suffer "everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, and most grievous and unspeakable torments in soul and body, without intermission, with the devil and his angels, in hell-fire forever."

Here is a double judgment, a twice-inflicted penalty, an enormously exaggerated punishment, and, worse than all, the grace which gave Christ to be a ransom for all so horribly distorted that the recovery of mankind from death by reason of it becomes to all but the elect an infinite disaster. The face of our God and Father is made to wear the devil's mask.

This monstrous and cruel misconception is based upon these misapplied texts: 1. The parable of the rich man in Luke xvi.—2. The words of Jesus in Mark ix, and Matthew xviii, where Jesus warns His disciples against the

danger of the fire of hell which is unquenchable. 3. The judgment-scene in Matthew xxv, where the unrighteous are sent away under a curse into eternal fire. 4. The words of St. Paul in describing the effects of the Lord's coming (2d Thess. i: 8) upon the wicked, as an "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." 5. Upon the symbolic language of the Revelation in which the beast and the false prophet and all their worshippers, who are represented as the bulk of "all that dwell on the earth," are said to be "tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment goeth up forever and ever."

That these passages furnish a false and fictitious foundation for this Westminster doctrine is apparent at once when one comes to see that not one of them relates primarily to the dealings of God with sinful men *after* their resurrection. They should all be located before that event. Let us examine them in turn.

The story of Dives and Lazarus (whether parable or narrative) on its face describes what befell the rich man in hades just after death. That after the death of the body his soul passed into torments is plain. That these torments were to continue forever is nowhere stated. On the other hand, Matthew x. 28 teaches that beyond the destruction of the body in the grave, which is one phase of hell, the soul also may be destroyed in hell. A fair inference is that during the period of the rich man's consciousness after death his soul was undergoing this process of destruction. What was to be the effect of his future restoration to embodied life is not hinted at. It is to be ob-

served that, before His own resurrection from the dead, Jesus was reticent in His teaching concerning the scope and effect of His approaching triumph over death and hell.

2. The warning words of Mark ix., etc., belong to the esoteric teaching of Jesus. They were specially addressed to *disciples*, and were intended to impress upon them the necessity of a present surrender of all the members and powers of their being unto God, if they would save it from destruction. But it is manifest upon their face that it was the present embodied life, and not a future resurrection-body, which Jesus had in view, and which was in danger of being destroyed in hell. The fact that He speaks of its fire as unquenchable no more proves that it is an agent for eternal torments than does the fact that John the Baptist told the Jews that the Messiah would "thoroughly purge His floor and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire" prove that the chaff was to be kept burning forever. The merest tyro in Old Testament prophecy ought to know that its uniform usage of the phrase "unquenchable fire" carries no such meaning with it. (See Deut. ix. 3, Jer. xvii. 4, Ezek. xx. 47, etc.)

3. The gathering of "all the nations" before the throne of the Son of Man, of Matthew xxv, is a feature of an administration which was to begin "before that generation passed away" (xxiv. 34), and evidently relates to living nations of mankind. There is not a word about the risen dead in the whole passage, nor in the vision of Daniel vii. from which the costume of the scene is drawn. In both passages a kingdom over the earth is the thing in view. The sorting to eternal life or eternal fire is something which has been going on ever since Jesus was raised to be both

Lord and Christ. There will doubtless be a consummating separation at "the end of the age." But, as the idea of resurrection is not introduced here, we are left entirely free to infer from other Scriptures what will be the effect of resurrection upon these multitudes sent into the eternal fire. As to any argument based upon the use of the phrase in verse 46—"into everlasting punishment"—there is doubt whether this phrase was ever used. The two ancient Italic versions which preceded the Vulgate, and which were the common Scriptures of Latin Christendom, read "eternal fire" in this verse, in conformity with verse 41. But if the word "punishment" must be retained, the question is still an open one, how far this "cutting off" (the primary meaning of the word *kolasis*) is to be arrested and ameliorated by that gracious arrangement which secures that all who died in Adam are to be made alive in Christ. Once receive this account, at its face value, as descriptive of a pre-resurrection judgment, and its force as a proof of the doctrine of endless torments is neutralized.

4. St. Paul's words in 2d Thess., i, 8 also plainly relate to a living generation of men overtaken by the judgments attendant upon Christ's coming,—the same as are described in 1 Thess., v, as saying "Peace and safety" when "sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child." To apply these words to a supposed mass of risen dead, is to read an idea into the passage which is not only not there, but which is positively excluded by all the accessories of the description.

5. To derive the doctrine in question from the symbolic teaching of the Revelation is to build on very uncertain ground. The beast and the false prophet are probably not

persons, but symbols of systems. And whatever punishment overtakes their worshippers is visited "upon them that dwell upon the earth." Risen men are certainly not here brought to view. Moreover, if the *smoke* of their torment ascends up forever,—as Ish. xxxiv. 10 affirms of the smoke of the burning land of Edom—, it is a very large inference from a very small premise to assume that all the adherents of these systems are to suffer this torment without end. Evidently the Old Testament prophet views the ascending smoke as a memorial of a relentless destruction. So the Apocalypse may describe a torment, the *results* and *proofs* of which will abide forever. At all events the whole complexion of the vision is changed when one comes to see that it locates itself this side of resurrection. The only passages in this dark book which lend color to the view that such a fate awaits men after resurrection are chapters xx. 11–15, and xxi. 8. The last of these two is of little value for proof because it puts us under no constraint to view these wicked classes as risen men. Those of the previous passage seem to be "the dead" called up for judgment. But as they had already been cast into death and hell for the sins of this life, there remains the probability that their second casting into the lake of fire was due to sins incurred during the judgment period *after* their resurrection. For the Messiah's judgment of the world is also a period of rule. And there remains also a probability that this penalty defined as "the second death," is the final destruction of such as found no forgiveness in this world to come. At all events, the passage, confessedly a very obscure one, does not teach that this lake of fire is for purposes of endless torment.

6. There is nothing then but misunderstood texts, and unwarranted inference to oppose to the uniform teaching of Scripture that resurrection is a gracious provision, even in the case of the unjust masses of mankind who are reached by it only after they have met the consequences of their sins and have been consigned to hell. It is a gracious interference in their behalf by the God and Father of mankind. Not to see this is to be blind to a most vital feature of the gospel.

It is for this reason that we labored while in the Presbyterian church, even to the sacrifice of our ecclesiastical life in it, that we might arouse our brethren in its ministry to this dreadful perversion of the gospel of the grace of God. And we earnestly hope, now that God has forced upon them the grave question of a revision of their Standards, that they will not blink the real source of the growing aversion to them. The doctrine of election will be seen to have a worthy meaning when they come to see that the church is now called as "the first fruits of God's creatures" in this great harvest from the fields of death, and that the whole of this redemptive plan, as it relates to their lost brethren of the human race, turns upon this fact of their vocation as the church of the first-born, invested with its high dignities and duties. We entreat them to consider whether, since they profess to worship Him who hath the keys of death and hell, it is giving Him the honor due to His high office to believe that the hosts of mankind who are held captive there are to have no other deliverance than one which is but a brief prelude to a redoubled and confirmed and endless agony. Charles Kingsley, in *Two Years Ago*, makes one of his heroes say:

"I do not think that God, when He sends a human being out of this world, is more cruel than you or I would be. If we transport a man because he is too bad to be in England, and he shows any signs of mending, we give him a fresh chance in the colonies, and let him start again to try if he cannot do better next time. And do you fancy that God, when He transports a man out of this world, never gives him a fresh chance in another—especially when nine out of ten poor rascals have never had a fair chance yet?"

Now just this merciful feature in the divine administration is contained in its provision to raise the dead. Death is the sinner's penal banishment from light and life. We would not abate one jot or tittle from the severity of this just sentence, nor from the rigors of that long bondage in death and hell which the banished must endure. We accept fully all the Scripture teaching upon this point. But are these "prisoners in the pit where no water is" never to be reached by a single ray of hope? Is no message of mercy ever to be sent to these lost "spirits in prison?" Are no multitudes of captives ever to grace our Lord's triumph over death and Satan, save a little flock of saints to whom it is His Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom? To answer "None" is to put dishonor upon the very crowning fact which makes His mission a gospel. It is to misconceive this whole scheme of grace. It is to make a jumble of His plan of the ages. It is to imagine that God's government is far less discriminating and merciful than man's. The fact is the very purpose of resurrection is to give men lost in death another chance in life. It does not make sure that all will so improve it as to inherit eternal life. Much less does it open to all

the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus for which *we* are now bidden to run. But it reveals to us that God's love and kindness toward men are deeper than even their guilt, and that neither the devil nor death can forever make it impossible for Him to do anything further for their reformation and relief.

We implore our former brethren to honestly face this question of their Confession, and inquire whether the dark statements referred to are not the ones which really lie at the bottom of their trouble, and whether fidelity to their Master and to the honor of His truth and His Name does not require them to give up these false interpretations, however venerable, and to turn the light of His resurrection upon these dark blots in their creed. We believe that the times are ripe—the hour is come—when not only from that church, but from Christendom, this hideous mask which has so long concealed the face of our Father, God, is to be taken away, and men everywhere shall be brought to see in the fact that He hath raised His Son Jesus from the dead, that there is a pledge of His love and a promise of hope for all mankind, both living and dead, and that this is the very thing which makes this gospel "glad tidings of great joy which shall be to all people."

JUDGMENT.

The doctrine of this magazine—that resurrection is redemptive—is based upon these plain principles:

1. On account of sin, man has been sentenced to death.
2. Whatever metaphorical use is made in Scripture of

the term "death," its ordinary meaning is the one that is primarily in view in this sentence.

3. The common Bible phrase, "the resurrection of the dead," refers to the restoration of dead men to life.

4. This recovery of the dead is the rescue from, or the cessation of, the penal condition of death.

That resurrection is therefore a gracious act would seem to be self-evident; and it never would have been regarded in any other way, were it not for certain false notions of judgment which have crept into theology, to which the idea of resurrection must needs be adjusted.

A primary false notion is that of the necessary immortality of sinful men. It is assumed that the death which is the wages of sin is that degradation of existence which results from separation from God, and that there is no such thing as death in the sense of cessation of being. From this point of view, resurrection is not the recovery to life of one who was dead; it is merely the re-endowment of the life with certain of its lost properties. But even in this view, it is difficult to see how it can be otherwise than a gracious act.

The mischief, however, of this view, lies in the fact that it takes away the proper emphasis which Scripture places upon the ideas of both death and resurrection, and distracts our attention from His judicial dealings with sinful man *in the realm of his life* to certain accessories of judgment which do not touch the essence of his life. It is with the life that God deals in judgment. It was man's life that was forfeited by sin. Men are in danger of losing their lives by reason of it (Matt. xvi, 26, R. V.) It was to save men's lives that the Son of Man is come (Luke ix,

56). If we lose sight of this and place the emphasis of man's penalty for sin on the degradation of his life, and deny that its loss is possible, we shall miss the meaning of the fundamental fact of the gospel, which is that man's life has been redeemed from destruction through a divine provision to raise him from the dead.

Now, out of this virtual denial of death as the wages of sin, there has arisen the current view that man does not meet his true penalty at death, but that it is awarded at a distant judgment day, and that resurrection is only a preliminary to judgment and final sentence. The truth is that judgment has already been passed upon man, the sinner. Death is the execution of a sentence pronounced long ago. We have often explained that death, or the loss of life, involves more than the death of the body. There is a further stage in the process of the dissolution of man's being. The soul also may be destroyed in hell. But there is not the shadow of a reason in the nature of things, nor in the words of our Saviour, for viewing this result as postponed to a remote judgment day. When He warns men of the danger of being cast into hell and destroyed there, He is uniformly speaking of an *immediate* peril. Even the judgment scene of Mathew xxv, which the common mind has been educated to look upon as a post-resurrection scene, and from which its notion of a future eternal hell is mainly derived, is distinctly prefaced by the declaration,, "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away until all these things be fulfilled." A judgment of resurrected men is not in view here at all, but of living nations in flesh and blood, who are viewed as passing in review before the Messiah's throne of judgment, to

which he was about to ascend after His resurrection. To conceive of the sentence to eternal fire here pronounced as visited upon men raised from the dead is, 1. To read into the passage an idea which it nowhere contains. 2. It is to run counter to the uniform teaching of Scripture that the wages of sin is death. The eternal fire must be, therefore, God's agent for inflicting this death penalty. The whole scene is a vivid picture of the *destruction* in reserve for the ungodly. 3. It is to utterly misconceive the place and meaning of resurrection, as lying at the other pole of the divine dealings—as a gracious arrest of penalty, a boon and not a curse.

The whole question we have raised as to the meaning of resurrection is bound up therefore with the question as to the *nature* and the *time* when men suffer the appointed penalty for their sins. For ourselves, we hold that all right thinking upon this subject must begin with the fact, that both the Old and the New Testaments pronounce the penalty of man's sin to be the loss in death of that life and estate in manhood with which God endowed him. The fact that the soul survives and suffers after the death of the body does not change the character of this penalty; it only completes the death-process, which involves the soul also, which is itself destructible (Matt. x. 28). This impending destruction of man's being can be averted only as men surrender themselves to Christ, and so save their souls or lives.

All this enables us to accept the truth of resurrection as a real gospel—a recovery to another life of men who had lost their lives by reason of sin, and as therefore a blessing to all mankind. Judgment, instead of being deferred to

that event, is seen to have been already visited in death, and in that long bondage in the death-state which precedes resurrection. It clears the way for this recovery. This view simplifies the whole method of the divine dealing. The penalty is seen to have been executed and the law of God satisfied. Room is therefore made for the exercise of grace, in accordance with His ancient promise to bless all the families of the earth and to cause all flesh to see His salvation. In Christ all who died in Adam shall be made alive. This is the *gospel,* glad tidings of great joy to all people. Resurrection is not warped and wrenched out of its proper place as a redeeming act of God. We are enabled to give to it its own proper significance, as a recovery of men, who had gone down to death under the curse of sin, to the privileges and opportunities of another life.

The objection to this view would be at once removed, if we would come to regard this gift of another life as not at all implying the eternal life of which Jesus constantly speaks as given to men through faith in Him. Only Christians receive this life. All other men come forth to such rank and degree of life as they are fitted for. And the possession of any lower form of life than that which is divine and eternal necessarily involves trial and discipline. This makes the resurrection of the unjust one of judgment (Jno. v. 29). They do not come forth to be judged for the sins of the former life: they have already paid the penalty for these. But they are not worthy of eternal life; and therefore the life they receive must be held under the conditions of privation and trial which pertain to all imperfect life. It is manifest also that God's law of harvest requires that the new life be graded according to fitness and previous

character. A criminal who has served out his sentence in prison, and whom the law discharges, cannot expect to carry into his new state of freedom exemption from all the disadvantages of his former condition. The deeper his former degradation, the harder must be the struggle to rise above it. So after the sinner's discharge from the prison-house of death, there is still room for the operation of the law that every one must receive in body according to deeds done. There is still the peril of a second death. And there remains under this system of divine dealing every motive to seek present salvation from sin, whose bitter fruit of death no sinner can escape, and to strive for that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

We urge our readers to study anew from the Word of God this whole matter of judgment for sin. What is its threatened penalty? Is the "eternal fire" of the New Testament something superadded to the original and uniform sentence of death, or is it God's agent in executing it? Are not all destructive agents in nature forms of this consuming fire—the angels of that devil who is "the prince of this cosmos"? Granting that the "soul," as the finer essence of man's embodied being, and as distinct from "spirit," may survive and suffer at the hands of these destructive agents, does that prove that it must suffer forever, or that it may not itself be destroyed? If it is to suffer forever these pangs of dissolution what is the use and meaning of resurrection? Has the grace of God in Christ provided to recover the lost spirits of men to another life only to load that life with the agonies of an endless torment? Is there no redemption in this recovery? Is it not the fruit of the ransom given for all? Are these lost ones to

be raised merely for judgment and punishment, when, by all laws natural and revealed, they have already suffered the appointed penalty? Is there so little in the repeated promise to "bless all the families of the earth" through a chosen seed, that the dead form no part of the all? And have the "royal priesthood" of the church nothing to do hereafter with their recovery?

We entreat all who read these questions to ponder them, and to consider whether they have yet risen to an understanding of what "the gospel of the grace of God" comprehends. Have not false views of the divine judgments, which are true and righteous altogether, so veiled the face of God from men that the world is yet blind to His glory as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ? Is not this the face of the covering which is yet cast over all peoples, and the vail that is spread over all nations which we are told (Ish. xxv.) must be destroyed, before men shall everywhere exclaim with gladness—"Lo! this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation"?

UNIVERSALISM.

But someone says "All this is blank universalism." Certainly it is not that which commonly goes by that name. The system known as "Universalism" teaches that all men must of necessity finally be saved to eternal life and blessedness. Our doctrine is that of the Scriptures, that all men have been redeemed from the death which is visited upon all for sin to the opportunities of another life.

That this opportunity will issue in the eternal salvation of all we have never taught, because Scripture affirms that there is a form of sin which hath no forgiveness in the world to come, and because it has not condescended to reveal what lies beyond the second death. We read of a second death, but not of a second resurrection. But whatever may be the error of dogmatic universalism, certain it is that there is a phase of universalism taught in Scripture which we are obliged to accept. The trouble with orthodoxy has been that, in its dread of an indiscriminate salvation, it has refused to give an intelligent place in its system to the universalistic teaching of the Bible. It is in that book that the word "all" so frequently occurs. There is an universalistic side to redemption, an universalistic sweep in the grand purpose of God in Christ Jesus (Col. i. 20), to which orthodoxy has always refused to do full justice, and of which it has always been afraid. There must be some broader meaning than it has yet recognized in the promise to cause all flesh to see His salvation, in the ransom given for all, the propitiation for the sins of the whole world by which "He tasted death for every man," and became "the Saviour of all men," in whom "all shall be made alive." We did not put these expressions into the Bible: we find them there, and are bound to give them a fair and candid recognition. For the reasons above given we have not felt justified in building upon them a doctrine of the final glorification in eternal life of every child of Adam. But we are bound to believe that every one has been redeemed from the primal curse of death, and that every one shall have through this gift of life a fair opportunity to win the

crown of life. In opposition to the old theology, which makes this provided gift of a future life an inconceivable calamity to the bulk of mankind (except as it has been able to offset its failure by peopling heaven with infants and idiots), we have insisted that the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a true gospel, a vast boon to the whole race, in that it insured a recovered life for all out of the pit of death and hell into which their sins have cast them, and that it is in this way that God is to make His ways known upon earth, His saving health unto all nations. All this, we have insisted, can be held and must be held without detracting in the least from the Scripture warnings against sin and its consequences, or from the inexorableness of that law of life and of character by which every man must reap the fruit of his doings. On the one side this law would seem to leave for sinful man no hope. But on the other side we see that God has connected with this law of death for sin a law of recovery through resurrection. We have no more right to conceal one side of this divine dealing than the other. If we are perplexed and bewildered in our efforts to adjust the one to the other, this gives no excuse for rejecting either. The present bewilderment of the church over this whole subject of future punishment grows out of the fact that she sees a kind of universalism in the Bible and knows not what to do with it. We have sought to show her what to do, without sacrificing her testimony to the wrath of God due for sin or abating the power of those evangelical motives upon which she relies to win men from it. Chief of these motives is the love of God—"God so loved the world." She has not yet known the meaning nor sounded the depths of that love. Hence

her presentation of it has been partial and confusing. Men have not known what to believe about it, nor how far they might trust it. Their God has appeared to them as now wearing a face of mercy, and now of implacable wrath. For these reasons, not only the Church, but the world to-day is anxiously waiting for some version of the gospel that shall reconcile to them both sides of the divine character, and give them a more stable and comprehensive basis upon which to build their hopes. The gospel of the resurrection supplies this want. It avoids the peril of what goes under the name "universalism," and at the same time it shows, as the old doctrine could never do, how that God loves all men, and is dealing as a Father with all, and has graciously interfered for the benefit of all, and has provided to bring all on to such a basis of life and privilege that if any fail of His highest gift of life, it must be because of such hardening of heart against His grace as shall prove them to be wholly incapable and unworthy of it.

THE DOCTRINE OF REDEMPTIVE RESURRECTION enables us to view human life from very much the same standpoint as that to which evolution conducts us. We see that it is the plan of God that life shall repeat itself; but only after a law which ties it to the past and makes it a development of what has gone before. Resurrection proves the unquenchable power of human life. After the destruction of the form of its existence (the body), in due time it takes on another, but only after the law—"To every seed his own body." Character-building is thus seen to be the great business of life, and the essential

preparation for its growth and blessedness in the future. And as perfect character is impossible, except as Christ be formed in us, this is the one thing needful—the one way of life—that we should receive Him, and so receive power to overcome death and to develop into the highest form of life,—power to become the sons of God.

THE DISCIPLINE OF SOULS.

Nothing in the universe is more important and interesting than the discipline of human souls. There are two ways of looking at this problem. The atheist and the agnostic cannot see in it anything outside the domain of natural law. The Christian is taught to view all the laws and forces of nature as fingers on the hand of God, and as the mode of His intelligent operation. From this point of view the training and discipline of every human soul is under the control of a providence so universal that its whole environment, natural and social, has been arranged in reference to it.

A soul is born into the world: What we call the laws of nature and of human relationships take charge of its nurture and development. They hedge it about with circumstances and determine its environment. They form the mould in which it takes on shape and character. They open before it opportunities, and set bounds beyond which it cannot pass. Every man finds himself bound as by hooks of steel to certain lines along which he must progress, and hedged in by barriers he cannot overleap. Well for him if he learns to recognize in all these events and

circumstances the hand of a wise and merciful Father, and submits himself to be taught of Him the daily lesson of their meaning. All men are thus passing through a daily discipline of life whose hidden lessons are of surpassing interest, and the results of which will fill the future with wonder and surprise.

But it is with Christians especially that this discipline is most marked and its results most significant. The end of God's discipline in every case is to form in men a higher nature and to train them for immortal dignities. The Christian differs from other men, in that he recognizes this end of his calling and professedly submits himself to God for the fulfilment of it. In the language of Scripture—true to the profoundest facts of the case—the old man must die out in him, and the new man be raised up in power. His destiny is to attain to that glorified and immortal manhood—the heir of all things—to which Jesus was raised. And "whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth."

Few Christians, indeed, realize at first to what they are committing themselves when they surrender to God and take on the yoke of Christ. The first disciples saw but a few steps along the path they were to be led when He bid them "Follow me." Gently, yet firmly, with infinite tact and tenderness, and yet with severe fidelity, He leads us all along His way of the cross as we are able to bear it. And yet none of us escape. "If ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not." This explains why the privations and disappointments and afflictions of Christians often exceed those of

other men. For a higher destiny there is needed a more severe and painful preparation. Moreover, to such a cross has he voluntarily submitted himself, and entered into covenant with God. He must not therefore complain of its hardship. The righteous man is even saved with difficulty. And if, beyond simply being saved, he is also to reign with Christ, he must expect to suffer with Him.

There is a class of passages bearing on this matter of our discipline which Christians frequently misapply, and hand over to that portion of their fellowmen whom they denominate as sinners. It is of and to themselves that St. Paul writes: "For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things in the body according to what he hath done, whether good or bad" (2d Cor. v. 10). "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to the flesh shall also of the flesh reap corruption" (Gal. vi. 7). To the same class the epistle to the Hebrews also speaks: "Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense." And again, "The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (x. 30). "Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear; for our God is a consuming fire" (x. 11, 28).

It is because Christians so generally and without warrant hand over these passages to others and refuse to apply them to themselves, that they have fallen into such gross mistakes concerning future punishment. In this matter of soul-discipline God is no respecter of persons. No special class goes scot-free. There is no side-door for escape. To say that God *out of Christ* is a consuming fire, is to per-

vert the warning addressed to us. It is *our* God, God *in* Christ, who is, to us, a consuming fire. It was *disciples* to whom Jesus spoke His warning words about going into hellfire.

All this should teach us that God's discipline of souls is uniform, although specially severe and minute in the case of those whom He has called to be saints, and who have accepted the terms of their high calling. Such receive their chastisement here. It is in part self-inflicted. They judge themselves. And when God chastens them, they are judged of Him that they may not finally be condemned with the world. Whereas the judgment and penalty of those who refuse to thus mortify their "members which are upon the earth" goes over into the future state. The life which refused surrender to God's will and the purifying baptism of His Spirit and fire, must be destroyed in hell. The word "hell" is a concrete term for all the consuming forces of nature and of life which make havoc of man's embodied being. Physical torment, mental anguish, are alike included, because both tend to break down and destroy it. Evildoers often here find themselves in hell. The newspapers every day report cases in which the sins of men and women find them out, tormenting them with pain and bodily anguish, making their cheeks haggard with melancholy, and throwing them into dungeons out of which they cannot come until they have paid the uttermost farthing. And still deeper dungeons await the wicked beyond the grave. The lives of many men are so evil that they must be taken all to pieces and the whole fabric destroyed in the eternal fire. The only door of hope for such men is that which resurrection opens out of this Gehenna, through

which they may sometime emerge, stripped and denuded of their former selves.

The Christian, however, finds present peace and the assurance of future happiness and dignity in yielding to the present discipline of God, as He lays the cross upon these desires of the flesh and of the mind which war against the soul. He knows that not only his salvation, but the high and useful place for which he is being trained, can be attained only as he thus humbles himself under the mighty hand of God. What we need better to know is that this firm but gentle hand presses upon and guides us through all the avenues of natural law and of human association. Every event and circumstance of this complex experience, the friends and foes that surround us, the rivalries and obstacles against which we contend, the poverty or wealth allotted to us, the potent, subtle play upon us and through us of physical forces; all these are but the touch of God's fingers upon the secret springs of our life, and the matrix in which He is forming and developing in us that new and higher manhood in Christ through which He means to carry out His designs and to show forth His praise in the ages to come.

GOOD WORKS.

It has always been difficult to precisely define the relation of good works to man's salvation. On the one hand it is asserted that it is "not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He hath saved us." On the other, no principle of the divine dealings is more constant and invariable than this: "Whatsoever a man soweth that must he also reap."

The harmony becomes apparent when we consider that there is a salvation which reaches all men, and which is wholly due to the good pleasure and grace of God. All men have been redeemed from the death due to all for sin. This is the "kindness of God our Saviour, and His love toward man" which appeared in His giving Himself a ransom for all. Good works have no place in the procuring of this great benefit. And he arose from the dead to give life to all, giving His flesh as living bread for the life of the world. The regenerating, saving power of His Spirit is God's free gift to the world.

All men, therefore, by the grace of God alone, have been lifted out of despair and death on to this level upon which they stand, redeemed from the death which came "by the offence of one," and invested with a new gift of life from Him who is the resurrection and the life.

But on this platform men now are, or hereafter must be, put on trial for eternal life, and this they must seek by patient continuance in well doing. In one aspect this life is indeed God's gift. As free as the sunlight it reaches all and is provided for all. But it can enter into and mould us for itself only as we open our hearts to it by faith, and as we appropriate it to ourselves from Christ the source of it And here comes in the office of good works. They are faith in action. They set the wheels of this life in us in motion. "If any man keep my words," and "do my works," says Jesus, "I will love him," and "my Father will love him," and "we will come unto him and make our abode with him." This is salvation—the power of God in Christ dwelling in us to purify and transform us into His image. And this is a power

unto good works. It lies dormant without them. "We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." No man can be saved therefore without good works, because no man is saved unless the life of Christ dwell in him, and that life is essentially one of good works, and cannot exist where they are not.

Let us see to it then that, while ascribing all our salvation to the grace of God, we do not overlook how important it is, if we are to receive this great benefit, that we do the things which are pleasing in His sight.

Of Use.—"It is the law of all earth, and heaven, and Him who made them;—That God is perfectly powerful, because He is perfectly and infinitely of use; and perfectly good, because He delights utterly and always in being of use; and that therefore we can become like God—as the very heathens felt that we can, and ought to become—only in proportion as we become of use. I did not see it once. I tried to be good, not knowing what good meant. I tried to be good, because I thought it would pay me in the world to come. But, at last, I saw that all life, all devotion, all piety were only worth anything, only Divine, and God-like, and God-beloved, as they were means to that one end—to be of use. . . . The whole world round us, and the future of the world too, seem full of light even down to its murkiest and foulest depths, when we can but remember that great idea,—An infinitely useful God over all, who is trying to make each of us useful in his place."—*Charles Kingsley.*

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

A LAWYER'S REASONS.—We clip the following from the *New York Evangelist:*

Editor of The Evangelist: Dear Sir, I have been interested in the discussion touching the proposed revision of the Confession of Faith. Your fairness in publishing letters on both sides of the subject has tempted me to suggest a view of the matter taken by some, but not, I think, expressed.

As a member of a Presbyterian Church, I should, if permitted, vote against the proposed revision, but not for the reasons usually given for such a position. The reason is this: We have a Confession of Faith that contains statements of doctrine not accepted by any enlightened member of the human race. This allegation is perhaps as nearly literally true as any general statement of such a nature can be. The proposed revision would strike out these absurdities. There are other doctrines in the Confession expressed in such a way that the Church is divided respecting them. A revision would result in a compromise as to these. The resultant creed would be acceptable to the majority of Presbyterians and would be binding upon the Church. As it is now, our creed is not binding upon anybody. By common consent no Presbyterian is forced to pretend to believe doctrines so utterly repulsive to him, and not believable even though a man could form a belief by operation of his will, and even though such doctrines are to be found in the Confession of Faith. The result is, that if I reject one doctrine because I do not, cannot believe it, my neighbor in the next pew has a right to reject likewise some other doctrine that shocks his common sense and his idea of God, and yet remain a Presbyterian. In this liberty I rejoice. Practically we have no binding creed, but each Church has its own, and indeed each member his own. This is right. The unity of the Church need not be disturbed, for there may still remain a bond of union in love for Christ and humanity far stronger and more lasting than could be made by any agreement as to matters of reason.

Whether this be a fine piece of irony or a sober setting forth of reasons, it well illustrates the laxity, and even the contempt, with which some members of that communion have come to view their authorized statements upon matters of unspeakable interest, and at points where, if anywhere, a Church is bound to be

perfectly truthful before God and man. All of these "repulsive doctrines" relate to the great questions of human destiny. Is it possible that that Church can remain content with her present attitude on these grave questions?

WHERE THE TROUBLE LIES.—The trouble with the advocates of revision is that they are groping after some way of reconciling impossible things. They believe in a God of Love, and yet they profess still to believe that He has arranged to hand over a large proportion of His creatures to the agonies of an endless hell. They believe that resurrection is the fruit of redemption, and yet that it will result in handing over multitudes of those reached by it to endless damnation. They have not yet learned the primary truth of the gospel, that God's provision to raise the dead is in fulfilment of His ancient promise to bless all the families of the earth through a chosen seed, and that, of necessity, the dead are a part of the all.

THE New York *Evangelist* publishes a strong plea from the Rev. Dr. Shedd against revision. The Editor, while acknowledging its ability, declares himself, however, unconvinced. The argument amounts to this—that the Westminster divines were able and faithful exponents of Scripture, and that we are not likely to improve upon their work. Dr. Shedd also argues that we have all reasonable liberty of interpreting the formulas they left us.

To this the Editor of the *Evangelist* replies that it is unreasonable to assume that we have learned nothing, even in theology, within the last two hundred years, and that, in the important matters to which the church bears testimony, she has no right to lay herself open to the charges made against politicians in constructing their platforms, and rest content with statements upon which anybody is allowed to put whatever interpretation they please. Indeed Dr. Shedd himself admits this in one part of his article where he says: Some propose "loose subscription" as a remedy when candidates of lax or unsettled views present themselves for licensure and ordination. This is demoralizing, and kills all simplicity and godly sincerity. Better

a thousand times for a denomination to alter its creed than to allow its ministry to "palter with words in a double meaning;" than to permit an Arian subscription to the Nicene Symbol, an Arminian subscription to the Westminster Confession, a Calvinistic subscription to the Articles of Wesley, a Restorationist subscription to the doctrine of endless punishment.

MISSIONS.—What is needed in order to give success to missions is such a presentation of Christianity as shall show it to be the fulfilment and crown of the best thought and highest aspirations of the human race, as expressed in its systems of philosophy and religion and science, in all of which it has been feeling after God if haply it might find Him. Such a presentation of the Christian scheme can never be made until the keystone of the faith is rightly fitted into the arch through a right view of resurrection. So long as the church preaches a broken and mutilated gospel, by denying to the resurrection of even the unjust its redemptive character, so long will the face of its God be masked before the nations and the glory of its Divine Lord be eclipsed. The Chinaman and the Buddhist will refuse it, because it brings before them a view of God more cruel, less merciful, less true to reason, to conscience, and to nature than the one they already possess.

IT SADDENS and disgusts one to read over the labored arguments by which some of the writers in "That Unknown Country" seek to prove the justice of the ordinary view of eternal punishment in hell. Uniformly the writer is compelled to assume not only the worst case, but an impossible case, and to leave out of view the myriad cases of weak and imperfect souls who cannot possibly answer to the terms of their description. They pre-suppose that the condemned sinner has had full light and knowledge of God's law and of His grace in Christ Jesus, that he has daringly and persistently rebelled against both, that he had full and untrammelled liberty of choice, and deliberately chose evil,—all of which is the merest nonsense as applied to the case of the vast majority of those who die in their sins.

THE *Episcopal Recorder*, in quoting an article from the *Sydney Morning Herald*, comments upon the proof it furnishes of "the wide-spread disease of scepticism which apparently prevails in all parts of the globe."

It is no doubt true that old beliefs are everywhere being shaken, and that, in feeling after something truer and better, many are wandering in blindness and unbelief. But this may be only God's way of ultimately leading mankind out into larger light.

The *Recorder* makes the common mistake of identifying the cause of truth with the "old beliefs" to which it stands committed. To depart from these at any point is, in its view, to take the first step in error. Some day it will learn that some men who have abandoned these where they saw them to be wrong, may be also lovers of the truth and of the Lord, and that the very defection which it deplores was the only course these men could have taken as loyal servants of Christ.

A CORRESPONDENT sends to *The Churchman* the following quotation from Justin Martyr, as showing how, as far back as the second century, Christians believed in the salvability of the heathen:

"We have been taught that Christ is the first-born of God, and we have declared above, that He is the Word, of whom every race of men are partakers; and those who lived reasonably (*meta logou*) are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists: as among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them."

While we agree with the general spirit of the above, our readers will bear in mind that we have always objected to the view that the just and devout of every nation must be regarded as "Christians," much less as "saints." They doubtless will be saved, but only through the knowledge of Christ received by them after they are raised from the dead. Both in the order of time and in the degree of life, the resurrection of this class will precede that of the unjust. This will be their recompense. It is this class who first reap the benefits of the gracious provision

of another life for all mankind. But it would be wrong to regard them as belonging to that special body who, even in this life, are made partakers of Christ, and who are called to reign with Him in those administrations of power and grace by which He shall show wonders to the dead; and they shall hear His voice and live.

"THE HERALD OF LIFE," published at Springfield, Massachusetts, is the organ of that class of believers in Life in Christ only, who affirm that resurrection is only for the righteous, and that the wicked will forever sleep the sleep that knows no waking. We admire the consistency of these brethren. Believing that death ends all opportunity, and perceiving that both reason and Scripture set forth the redemptive character of resurrection, they find themselves shut up to this alternative: Either the doctrine of universal salvation is true, or universal resurrection must be denied. As they reject the former, they deny the latter. The editor quotes some of the "hard questions" propounded in our last number, and regards them as unanswerable by those who hold that the wicked are raised simply to be damned, or to be killed a second time. He urges such to "try their hand at a fair and full reply" to the following:

"If death be the wages of sin, and if hades be the prison-house in which those who die in sin are held captive, what motive either of righteousness or of grace can there be in God's provision to raise these multitudes of captives from the dead?" He also asks:

> What else than a most overwhelming and unspeakable curse could a resurrection to a new life be to the ungodly? In such a case, how could any man preach the resurrection as a "crowning and triumphant provision of the grace of God?" * * * What an absurd redemption is that which redeems men from death to plunge them into death again! But such is the redemption that even some Adventists argue!

For ourselves, seeing as we do the redemptive nature of resurrection so clearly taught in the Bible, we, too, would be com-

pelled to deny that the unjust are to share in it, provided we believed that death for all this class is the end of hope. But nothing is more plain to us than that the resurrection of the dead is the hope of the dead (Acts xxiii. 6). The *Herald of Life* brethren shut themselves up, however, within too narrow limits when they conclude that this compels universalism. An universal redemption to life does not change the conditions upon which *eternal* life is bestowed. It does not imply that all so raised will be set free from the bondage which inheres in every imperfect form of life, or that all will successfully pass the ordeal of trial and judgment through which everyone must enter into life eternal. These conditions remain fixed—the way never ceases to be strait and narrow. If these strict conditions be held fast to, then there is no more objection in righteousness why God should prolong the sinner's opportunity of salvation by restoring to him another life beyond death, than there is that after rejecting the gospel in youth, He should still give the sinner a future probation in middle life and old age. After one has suffered the sentence of death for sin, recovered life does not change for him the terms of salvation. These can never change. If our friends who are "life-believers" would but admit this, they would not be driven to their denial of a general resurrection, in the face of such passages as Gen. xxii. 18, Hosea xiii. 9 14, Jno. v. 29, Acts xxiv. 15, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A Presbyterian minister writes as follows:

Your doctrine, so far as I have noticed, is just what the wicked like. Assure them a priest will save them, or God will change His plan and save them in another world—only let them alone in sin here,—and they are content. This doctrine is embraced by drunkards and adulterers and pleasure seekers. You will hear it in saloons and bar-rooms and in any concourse of sinners. I wish and pray that you may give up the error, and preach and labor for the salvation of souls.

We do not object to criticism, nor to the faithful wounds of a friend, but we do object to such a flagrant mis-representation of our doctrine as is here given. Instead of our teaching that "God will change His plan and save them in another world," we have found a special reason for our doctrine in that it represents God's attitude toward sinners as unchanging from age to age, the same yesterday, to-day and forever. And instead of His "letting them alone in sin here," or anywhere, we have always insisted that, both in this world and in all worlds, He is a consuming fire toward sinners. "Drunkards and adulterers, and pleasure seekers" go into hell, even in this life, and into deeper torments and destruction beyond the grave. And there they must remain so long as they abide such. Where men have been brought up under the notion that the only two alternatives of doctrine concerning the future state are either one of endless torment in hell, or an indiscriminate universalism which represents God's just wrath against sin as weakly overcome by His pity, there men may, when they hear the old doctrine of hell questioned, easily take up with the absurdity that they can go on in their sins here with safety. But this false conclusion is made possible only because they have been falsely educated. The new and better doctrine may, before it is understood, encourage such false hopes, but the old doctrine is really responsible for driving them to this extreme.

We read in the New Testament that the publicans and the harlots went into the kingdom of God before the Scribes and the Pharisees. Will our correspondent point to a single instance in which Jesus drew that class of sinners to Him by preaching to them the doctrine of an endless hell? We ask him, too, whether the history of Christendom, past and present, has proven that this doctrine is an effectual restraint upon such sins as he specifies? Do not the minds of such sinners, and of men in general, react against this doctrine of endless punishment, and so drive them, knowing no other alternative, into universalism or infidelity? Is he sure that our more reasonable doctrine of future punishment, which represents God's anger against sin as the same in all worlds, and that without holiness no man shall see

Him, and which requires the utter destruction in the pit of death and hell of the whole fabric of men's evil lives before even His grace can find a way to do anything for them, and which refuses to liberate them, even in resurrection, from the operation of the law that "whatsoever a man soweth that must he also reap," may not arouse in such men a deeper, because truer, view both of God's righteousness and love? What such men need is 1st, a deeper conviction that, by no sort of device can they slip through or evade the operation of God's unchanging law—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and 2nd, that they have a Father so gracious that not even death can so separate them from Him, but that, whenever, even from its far country, they come to themselves and say "I will arise and go to Him," He will be found ready to receive them. Suppose the prodigal son had been told that, after a certain period when all his substance was wasted, there would be absolutely no opportunity for His return, but that his father's heart would be steeled against him, would that have been the best thing for him? Can we be sure then that it is the best thing for sinners to tell them that, after death has utterly stripped them, there will be no further hope, but that God's anger will burn against them forever? Is that the kind of "Father" that Jesus came to make known to men, or that is most likely to arouse in the sinner's breast the hope which is essential in faith, and by which "we are saved?"

THE REV. R. D. HITCHCOCK, D. D., in his sermons on *Eternal Atonement*, p. 300, says:

By and by men will be looking back and wondering at us Christians in these last years of the nineteenth century, that we so poorly understood the gospel, overlaying it, some of us with ritual, others with dogma. Lament it, my brethren. We have much to be ashamed of. But let not your heart be troubled. More Pentecosts than one have come already. And more are yet to come with rushing pinions and tongues of flame.

WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. V.] NOVEMBER, 1889. [NO. 11.

"WHITHER?"

The Presbyterian Church has experienced a sensation in the publication of a book bearing the above title. Its author is a leading professor in the Union Theological Seminary of New York City, the Rev. Charles A. Briggs, D. D. More than any other leader in that church, Professor Briggs is profoundly conscious of the wonderful theological revolution going on in our day. This volume is an effort to scan the horizon and to point out whither this drift of modern religious thought is tending.

We are glad to find that the author sees in this general ferment signs that the sky is being cleared of some old theological errors which have obscured the sunlight of the Christian faith and brought about the division of the church into hostile camps. He believes that in the breaking up of this darkness and confusion the scattered bands of the one Church of Christ will arrive at a better understanding of the truth, and be drawn together into the unity of a larger faith and hope and effort for the salvation of mankind. He does not exclude from this final unity even the Roman Catholic Church, in which the essentials of Christian doctrine, however obscured, have always been maintained. And he makes it plain that it is the duty of every

intelligent Christian and of every denomination, each one of which has been giving emphasis to special aspects of the truth, to contribute their part toward the elimination of the errors that divide us, and the discovery of those larger views of truth by whose clearer shining and attractive power we may all be drawn into one fellowship, and the Saviour's last prayer for His church be answered.

Under this head we quote as follows:—

Progress in religion, in doctrine, and in life is demanded of our age more than of any previous one. Every Christian should make up his mind to follow the guidance of the Divine Spirit, who will fulfill the promise of the Master and lead us into all truth. There never has been a period in which the scholar had such a vast circle of truth in which to study. There never has been a time in which the church had such a vast work to do for the Master. . . . Is the Church of Jesus Christ to drift along in the rear, too conservative to make any more progress than it is forced to make; too reactionary to be aggressive, except in attack upon those who would excite it by criticism and stimulate it by discoveries to take its proper place in the advancing host of God? Research, speculation, investigation, invention, discovery are everywhere welcomed save in theology. Novelties in theology are regarded as little better than heresies. But there are Christian scholars who will not pull back with the reactionaries, who refuse to sleep with the conservatives, who decline to drift idly with the stream; who are determined to steer toward the goal of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; who will use all the energy of human nature and all the results of modern learning in theological research, in religious discovery, and in ethical invention, looking to their enthroned Saviour for strength, and following the guidance of the Divine Spirit in quest of the truth, the sanctifying truth of God. . . .

Battle for the truth is infinitely better than stagnation in error. Every error should be slain as soon as possible. If it be our error we should be the most anxious to get rid of it. Error is our greatest foe. Truth is the most precious possession. There can be no unity save in the truth, and no perfect unity save in the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Let us unite in the truth already gained and agree to contend in Christian love and chivalry for the truth that has not yet been sufficiently determined, having faith that in due time the Divine Spirit will make all things plain to us. . . . Truth fears no light. Light chases error away. True orthodoxy seeks the full blaze of the noontide sun. In the light of such a day the unity of Christendom will be gained. Pp. 267, 297.

We cannot refrain from recalling just here that this was the ground upon which this magazine was started a few years ago, and upon which we made the movement in Presbytery for the revision of the Westminster Eschatology which issued in our withdrawal, by their advice, from the church. We saw that here was a great barrier to the final unity of the church, and a great hindrance to the present usefulness of the Presbyterian Church. The present revision movement in that church is due to her growing conviction that there is something in her system of doctrine—she hardly knows yet what it is—out of harmony with the larger truth of the gospel and the more catholic conception of the church, and which is therefore a hindrance to its perfection. For seeking to show her where the trouble lies, and in the way here commended by Professor Briggs, we were invited to withdraw.

It is largely to meet the emergency occasioned by this revision movement that this book of Professor Briggs has been written. He finds ample defects in the Westminster

Standards, although he stoutly contends that they are much more liberal and progressive than they have been made to appear by the dogmaticians—in which class he places some of the most revered names in Presbyterian annals. But he opposes this attempt to tamper with this venerated symbol, not because it is perfect or perfectly suited to our times, but because the new cloth will not fit into the old garment. He would, therefore, preserve it as it has come down to us, but not as a prescribed standard, nor a barrier to free and enlightened progress. Such is his general position. It will be interesting, however, to note at what points, as he affirms, the church has departed from these standards and what paths of progress she is now bound to tread.

His bold general statement is:

> The Presbyterian Church is not orthodox judged by its own Standards. It has neither the old orthodoxy nor the new orthodoxy. It is in perplexity. It is *drifting* toward an unknown and a mysterious future.

Our limits will not permit us to follow the author through all the particulars in which he traces this drift. We must confine the examination principally to those to which we have called special attention in this magazine.

We have all along maintained that the Spirit of God was leading the church at large into wider views of His grace toward mankind and into larger hopes for its future. This book furnishes plenty of evidence of this; although neither this author, nor the church which he represents, have yet discovered how *fundamentally* at war with this larger faith are the eschatological teachings of the Westminster Confession, nor how fatal is its misconception of that foundation article in the Christian faith, "I believe in the res-

urrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." A document that can see in the gracious purpose of God in providing life beyond death for the human race, after its forfeiture of life by sin, no higher end nor more glorious issue than the endless misery of the great bulk of those so restored has an ugly sore on the face of it, which no surface expedients can ever succeed in covering up.

Let us notice some of the defects in this region, which Professor Briggs points out, and some of his frequent admissions in the direction of the larger hope.

He tells us that "Presbyterianism is not the last word of God to man. God has something vastly better for us than Calvinism" (page 16); that "the traditional orthodoxy has been undermined and honey-combed by recent Biblical and historical studies" (page 18), and that "it is interesting, and at the same time distressing, to observe that all the faults of Traditionalism converge at the point of eschatology, at which the entire church is in great perplexity" (page 195).

"It is not so easy as it used to be to think that for any act of sin, however small its importance, relatively speaking, the sinner must suffer in hell-fire forever, unless redeemed by the grace of God. It is a hard doctrine to teach that all mankind are doomed to everlasting damnation for the original sin in which we share with our first parents. . . . Our Saviour teaches that there is only one unpardonable sin; that the sin against the Holy Spirit is the only one that cannot be forgiven, either in this life or the next" (page 109).

In the times of the Westminster Assembly, little was known of the heathen world. The divines did not stumble over the doctrine of the lost condition of the heathen. A few broad-minded men, such as Zwingli, indulged in a

larger hope, and thought that the grace of God might save Socrates and Plato; but these were exceptions, and this view was looked upon with suspicion. It is only by the vast extension of commerce in modern times, and the opening up of the world to the knowledge of the church, that Christian people have been impressed with the thought that the vast majority of mankind now living are given up to everlasting punishment by the Old Theology; and, accordingly, recoiling from this pit of horror, the church in general and most recent theologians have sought in some way to save some of the heathen" (page 118).

The Westminster Confession, however, gives us, by Professor Briggs' showing, no relief from this hard doctrine. It gives no countenance to an universal salvation for infants, nor to the salvability of the heathen, to which the modern Calvinist so readily resorts. On page 120 we read:

There can be no doubt that the Confession means by "all other elect persons," incapables; that is, those who have not their normal faculties of mind, and so, like infants, are incapable of hearing the outward call of the gospel and responding to it. The authors of the Confession had no thought of including the heathen in this class. Those who seek to find a basis for the salvation of elect heathen must look for it elsewhere. . . . Those who fall back upon the freedom and the fullness of the grace of God for the salvation of some heathen may be correct, but they go against the express doctrine of the Standards and assert what the Confession regards as very "pernicicious and detestable error."

Not only is the salvation of the heathen strictly ruled out; the universal salvation of infants has no proper place in the Westminster scheme.

"We are able to say that the Westminster divines were

unanimous on this question of the salvation of elect infants only. We have examined the greater part of their writings, and have not been able to find any different opinion from the extracts we have given. The Presbyterian churches have departed from their Standards on this question, and it is simple honesty to acknowledge it. We are at liberty to amend the Confession, but we have no right to distort it and to pervert its grammatical and historical meaning."

The whole mass of mankind, then, except the elect who hear and obey the gospel call, and a portion of the infant and imbecile class of the human race, are by this scheme consigned to an endless hell, and that, too, as Professor Briggs shows, without any proper probation, either moral or under the gospel; for its doctrine is that the true probation of the race was in Adam, and that all men are born under the condemnation then incurred.

That the church at large, and Professor Briggs in particular, are in revolt against this hard doctrine, especially as it applies to the case of infants and the heathen, very plainly appears in this book. For himself, while adhering to the Calvinistic view of probation, he would find relief in "a more comprehensive view of redemption, and in the extension of the gracious operations of God into the middle state." (Page 137.)

"We must admit that the innumerable millions of heathen who have passed into the middle state have had no real probation. They have had sufficient of the light of nature to condemn them as sinners. But the Westminster Confession teaches that they have had no light of nature sufficient to save them, and they have had no offer of the grace of the gospel. Such a condition of affairs is no probation—they have had no opportunity of salvation whatever, according

to the Westminster scheme. And the probation "in some way or other, and to some extent or other," of Dr. Morris is rather an indefinite sort of thing to hang the everlasting destiny of any man upon.

If this life is a probation upon which our everlasting future depends, then in order to have a fair trial and an equitable judgment, it is necessary that all should have a true and a complete probation. The lesser stages of probation must lead up to the higher, until every opportunity has been rejected and the only unpardonable sin has been committed. The doctrine that this life is a probation leads inevitably to the position that the middle state is a still larger field for probation for the vast majority of our race who have had no probation here. . . . . Christian ethics will inevitably compel every probationist to become an out-and-out probationist for this world and for the next.

Calvinists must give up this contra-confessional doctrine altogether and recover their position on the Westminster doctrine of original sin and of redemption. The question we have to determine as Calvinists is whether the divine grace is limited in its operation to this world of ours, whether the divine act of regeneration may take place in the middle state or not, whether any part of the order of salvation is carried on there or not, and if any part, what part. We have already seen that the divine grace is not confined to this world, that sanctification by the divine grace must continue in the middle state. But we see no reason why the divine grace may not regenerate all the elect before they leave this world. If the divine grace may be applied to the millions of infants dying in infancy, why not also to millions of adult heathen? These questions force themselves upon us in connection with our hopes for the salvation of infants and heathen, and they must be answered before there can be any comfort and stability in modern theology." (Pp. 220, 221.)

True, they must be answered, but the reader will fail to

find any satisfactory answer in this volume. Dr. Briggs is plainly and very properly dissatisfied with his own attempts at an answer. He wants the discussion, however, to go on, and makes this worthy plea for tolerance and liberty.

It is evident that in the whole field of Eschatology there is great perplexity in the minds of the theologians and the ministry, as well as the people. The middle state must be opened up in the discussions that are in progress. There must be the fullest liberty in this debate. Those who depart from the Confession in the direction of narrowness, limiting the grace of God, cannot in the name of orthodoxy condemn those who are more generous in their views of the operation of the divine grace in the middle state. Those who claim to be conservatives in their departures from the Confession have no right to censure those who recognize themselves as progressives. In some respects the conservatives are the greatest sinners. Pg. 222.

All these questions are now in dispute. Men are seeking relief by the doctrine of the extension of redemption into the middle state, by conditional immortality, by annihilation of the wicked, and by reaction to the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory. The interest in these questions of the future life is wide-spread and is increasing. There must be liberty of investigation and room for differences in the transition period through which we are passing. The results will be of incalculable advantage to the church—for when the future life has become more real, more certain, more fixed in the hopes and anticipations of men, this life will gain in significance as a preparation and vestibule of the better life to came. (Pg. 287).

The copious extracts we have made from this volume will give our readers an idea of the aim and spirit of its author. We rejoice in his tolerance, his aspirations after unity, his larger hope for mankind, his growing knowledge of the grace of God. But at the same time, beyond

giving voice to these growing sentiments in the minds of the best thinkers and the best Christians in the church, he has contributed but little to the solution of the grave questions he brings before us. There are points at which he treads cautiously, hedgingly, where he ought to speak out with boldness. He has evident sympathy with some form of the doctrine of a future probation for those who have had none here, but saves himself by the remark that he sees no reason why many such may not be included among the elect, and why divine grace may not regenerate them without a probation before they leave this world. The book strikes us as the bold effort of an able mariner to sail across these unknown seas without chart and compass. It abounds in confusing suggestions and inconsistent statements about probation and future judgment and "the middle state" which would not be possible had the author ever grasped the great and commanding principles which Scripture furnishes for the solution of this whole mystery. He does not know the meaning of the wages of sin which is death; otherwise he would not be driven into speculation about a middle state during which the case of those who are neither alive nor dead, who had no probation here, may somehow be met by the grace of God. He does not understand the gospel of the resurrection, and that God's way of providing for this immense class is not in dealing with dead men shut up in hades for their sins, but with men recovered to life out of this pit of death and hell through resurrection. It is strange how absent from all his philosophy of the future is this doctrine which St. Paul preached before Agrippa of a "hope toward God that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the

unjust." Our author stoutly contends for the fact that men come into the world and go down to death under judgment, that they have no probation here—he is not sure that they have one hereafter—but that all will be called up for judgment at "the last day." And yet they have been once judged and sentenced and suffered the penalty. Resurrection does no more for them than to call them up to another judgment and damnation, unless perhaps the "middle state" may bring some change! How much more sensible and rational and Scriptural to hold that death and the bondage in sheol which follows it—the death-state—is the appointed penalty for sin—a bondage made intense and prolonged according to character, but that God's grace has found a way of taking up again the case of these prisoners in the pit through their resurrection from the dead, which grace also is graded in its operation according to character—"every man in his own order," and "to every seed his own body." The whole Christian world has been betrayed into error at this point by its false conception of a final judgment—setting aside the one our Lord gives of a judgment that should begin with His resurrection, and before that generation passed away. And equally it has falsely dissociated the idea of a future life for both classes of mankind, the just and the unjust, from the hope of the resurrection of the dead, by conceiving of resurrection as a very remote occurrence at the end of time, in disregard of our Saviour's word, 'I AM the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." With a right view of resurrection, there is no need of this theological invention

of a long intervening nondescript called "the middle state," which is neither one of death nor life. No need of superadding to the uniform death-sentence for sin the imaginary horrors of an endless torment in eternal fire—eternal fire is but the agent in executing this sentence—no need of a double judgment and a double sentence—no need of the unjust aspersion that myriads of the human race are to be consigned to an eternal hell without any personal trial or any chance to escape, or for the almost equally dishonoring assumption that millions will be swept into heaven with its blessed activities and joys without any moral training and fitness for it, nor any striving for this crown. And there would be no room for such distortion in the church of the meaning of this crowning provision of God's grace—the resurrection from the dead—as if it were redemptive to the elect only, and untold retribution and unspeakable horror to all others. Its essential character as the redemption of the human race from death—glad tidings of great joy to all people—would shine out, while at the same time the truth would also be disentangled, that no man can ascend from this platform of recovered life to the heights of purity and blessedness and immortality in eternal life, except by patient continuance in well doing. Christ must be formed within us as a new power of holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. May God speed the day when there shall be raised up in the Presbyterian Church men who shall be able, under the power of this commanding principle, to guide her through these deep perplexities, in the maze of which this book reveals her as blinded and bewildered.

BARRIERS.

In one of the chapters of "Whither" Professor Briggs asserts that not only Presbyterians, but all denominations of Christians "have departed from their Standards and are in the drift of the 19th century." He says:

And this is exactly what we ought to expect from the history of the church in former ages. The church of Jesus Christ cannot long remain stationary. Why should any one have the presumption to suppose that the 17th century was the goal of Christian history, or that the definitions then made are the final doctrines for all time? The very fact that the 17th century was a century of discord, of strife, of division in the churches, should teach us to look with some suspicion upon its work.

As a Presbyterian, I do not hesitate to say that Christian theology did not reach its perfection in the Westminster Assembly. The Westminster divines made no claim to infallibility. They made an advance in Christian theology beyond any of their predecessors, but this ought to have encouraged their successors to advance still further the banner of Christian knowledge.

Christian doctrine advances through the centuries under the guidance of the divine Spirit until He has led the church into all truth.

He then specifies some leading doctrines that divide the churches and are the main barriers to Christian union, as follows:

1. The first great barrier to Christian union is the theory of *submission to a central ecclesiastical authority claiming divine right of government.* For this divisive doctrine the Roman Catholic Church is especially responsible.

2. The second great barrier to the reunion of Christen-

dom is *subscription to elaborate creeds.* This is the great sin of the Lutheran and Reformed churches.

3. The insistance upon *uniformity of worship.* This is a special sin of the Church of England.

4. The refusal of Baptists to recognize the validity of any mode of baptism but that of immersion. This, he says, at one blow destroys the ministry and the ecclesiastical position of all the other churches.

5. Traditionalism, or the tenacious adherence to opinions and customs which have come down by inheritance, and largely from foreign national churches, and which the church has outgrown.

It is evident that there must be a rising tide of spiritual life in all the churches to lift them above these barriers and bring them into unity. And this must come with a more comprehensive knowledge of the purpose of God in sending His Son to be the Saviour of the world. It is the knowledge of God which supplies the only basis for growth in spiritual life and into the stature of perfect manhood in Christ. So long as the universal hope revealed in the primary doctrine of the Christian faith—the resurrection of the dead—is so generally denied in the churches, so long there can be no comprehensive grasp of the great plan of redemption, and no true perception of the goal toward which the human race is being conducted under that plan. The great defections and divisions in the church first arose through the obscuration of this "hope toward God" for the human race. The church soon ceased to be the true mediator and educator of mankind in its progress toward its goal, and degenerated into an imposing institution for the salvation from everlasting torments of such individuals out of the doomed mass as she could reach. The church

at large must recover her true position, and build up herself again into unity upon it, as God's chosen priesthood to convey the blessings of His salvation, not only to all who live upon the earth, but, as the first-born from the dead, to carry the light of resurrection-hope to that great majority of their human brethren who have gone down as captives into the regions of the dead.

THE FIRE OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS.

An important pre-requisite to a right understanding of the doctrine of future punishment is a right conception of the present operation of God's righteousness as a consuming fire toward all that is evil in men, in nations, and even in the creature now subject to vanity. This fire, however, even where it burns to destroy, does not preclude the hope of restoration. The two sides of the Divine character and dealing must be viewed together if we would know God. He is both Righteousness and Love. He who has ordained the law of death for sin provides also in grace a resurrection. But neither in this life nor the life to come can His fire cease to burn against sin. Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

A friend has sent to us the following quotations from a recent commentary on Isaiah, as very much in the line of what he had met with in our book upon *The Fire of God's Anger:*

Isaiah's figure of life was a burning: ours is a battle. . . . We fight in an atmosphere that affects us every one

far more powerfully than the opposing wills of our fellow-men. Around us is the all-pervading righteousness of God; and it is the effect of this which we see in the calamities and the changes of life. (We should learn to view also the laws and forces of nature as the agents of this all-pervading righteousness.—ED.) We see plainly that Isaiah was right. Far more operative than the intrigues of politicians or the pride of Assyria, because it used these simply as its mines and its fuel, was the law of righteousness, the spiritual energy which is as impalpable as the atmosphere, and yet strong to burn and to try as a furnace seven times heated. . . . Righteousness is not an occasional spark; it is the atmosphere that surrounds us. "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings"? We shall best learn this truth in the way the sinners in Jerusalem learned it. . . . Each sinner had something burnable in himself, something which could as little stand the fire as the Assyrians could. There was no difference in this fire inside or outside the walls.

With the knowledge that conscience thus gives us, let us now look at a figure which must be within the horizon of us all. A man who was once of the most commanding stature among his fellows—the straight back and broad brow of a king of men—what is the last sight of him that will remain with us?—a bent back (we speak of character), a stooping face, the shrinking outlines of a man ready to collapse. It was not the struggle for existence that killed him, for he was born to prevail in it. It was the atmosphere that told on him. He carried that within him on which the atmosphere could not but tell. A low selfishness or passion inhabited him and became the predominant part of him, so that his outward life became only its shell; and when the fire of God pierced this he was as thorns cut down that are burned in the fire.

And so when we behold fortunes and character go down in the warfare of this world, we ought to remember that

awful flame, which, unseen by common men, has been revealed to the prophets of God.

Isaiah abounds in unforgetable descriptions of the ceaseless activity of the Divine righteousness. To him life was so penetrated with the active justice of God that he described it as bathed in fire, blown through with fire. Life as he saw it was steeped in flame.

"THE MAJORITY."

> "All that tread
> The globe are but a handful to the tribes
> That slumber in its bosom."
>
> *Bryant's Thanatopsis.*

The trouble with modern eschatology is that it concerns itself only with the fate of the living. It knows of no redemption that can reach the vast armies of the dead, and refuses to admit any possible change in their destiny as fixed for each one at the hour of death. But a promise to raise the dead lies at the very core of the gospel of redemption. Our blind leaders of the blind refuse to see in resurrection any merciful provision to meet the need of these unnumbered multitudes who died in their sins, and many of them, long before He who came to draw all men unto Him was lifted up. Are not the "tribes that slumber in earth's bosom" a part of "all the families of the earth" to whom the seed of promise was to bring blessing? Is not Jehovah the God of the dead as well as of the living? Is death then a foe in His universe so masterful as to have shut up these myriads forever beyond His power to bless? Away with such false perversion of His word of truth and grace, and such foul aspersion of Him who is mighty

to save! The future we have to think about, and that has now been illumined by the light that broke upon the world on the third day after the crucifixion, is for this great majority as well as for us. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living."—Rom. xiv. 9.

THE BLESSING OF ESAU.

In the present discussion over the revision of the Westminster Confession we hear a great deal about election and reprobation. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," is the oft-quoted text by which its stern doctrine of the divine decree is proved. Now, there is no doubt that the difference between Jacob and Esau was a matter of divine choice. The great mistake of the Reformed theology, however, lies in its false assumption that there are only two possible destinies before men, and that to fail of the highest is to be plunged into the lowest. It knows no other future for mankind—out of which God chooses subjects of His special grace—than either Heaven or an eternal hell. But have our Calvinistic brethren never read in Genesis that Isaac had a lower blessing even for Esau who despised his birthright, and from the epistle to the Hebrews (xi. 20) that "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come?" This is what we have been seeking to urge upon them through this magazine,—not to give up their doctrine of election, but to give it wider scope, and confess that in the "things to come" God has left room for other and wider reaches of the blessings

of His salvation than those of which His church are now the recipients. And we have specially sought to show that this is the very meaning of that crowning provision of His grace—the redemption through Christ of mankind from the curse of death to the privileges of another life. This is the meaning of that prime verity of the Christian faith,—the resurrection of the dead. This opens up those "things to come" by which even Esau shall find blessing in the latter day.

DR. CANDLISH ON CREED-SUBSCRIPTION.

We approve of the following, which we clip from an article in the *Independent*, from the pen of the Rev. J. S. Candlish, D. D., Professor of Theology at Glasgow, and of the Free Church of Scotland:

The least measure of relief that would really meet the case would be, I think, a form of subscription binding the subscriber only to those things in the Confession that are essential and necessary, not to any system, but to Christianity and the Gospel of Christ. This is really all that the Church has a right to require; for no particular Church is entitled to prescribe terms of communion, or of offices, for herself, other than those that she believes should be made for the Church universal; and the only principle by which that question can be decided is, that such beliefs only be required, as are necessary for the right discharge of the duties of the office to which the candidate is to be admitted; *i. e.*, in the case of ministers, for preaching the Gospel so as to save and edify souls. The Church may, when occasion calls for it, issue testimonies, expounding more fully her views of the bearing of Chris-

tian truth on various relations and opinions of men; and much of the Westminster Confession may be regarded as really of the nature of a testimony rather than of a creed. Such a formula as I have indicated would indeed be somewhat indefinite. It would leave the decision as to what is essential in the Confession in the first place to the individual conscience, and ultimately to the Church; and her judgment would need to be exercised in the tolerant and catholic spirit inculcated by Dr. Briggs. But it would have the advantage of not only giving a safe standing in the Church, but a clear conscience, to those whose services it is desired to retain in the ministry.

It may be objected that this practically brings the church to the position of having no binding creed whatsoever, and deprives her of any control over the doctrine of her authorized teachers. To this we reply:

1. That she may still require assent to the great verities of the Christian faith as "essential and necessary, not to any system, but to Christianity itself."

2. She may lay all the stress she pleases on Christian *character* as a prime element in fitness for the ministry. Here is where the New Testament is especially emphatic. A man, to teach the truth of Christ, must show that he has the spirit of Christ. Our churches now reverse this. They are more tolerant of heresy in life than heresy in opinion.

3. By insisting that her office-bearers shall be men in whom Christ dwells, she can afford to give such men liberty. She has the surest guarantee that they will be guided into all truth and kept in the way of it. The cowardice and weakness of the church in our day is seen in the fact that she is afraid to trust the Spirit of God in the minds and hearts of her ser-

vants. A normal church is an inspired church. As she has practically abandoned the ground that the presence of the Spirit in the body is a sufficient guarantee for its safety, she has resorted to creeds and confessions carefully drawn out, as the guardians of her purity. It is even possible for the church to err in putting the Bible above the Spirit who inspired it. The Lord never meant that even His own book should supply in His church the place of His own ever-present and all-sufficient Spirit. The church existed and made splendid conquests before the full Bible was written. And while we yield to no man in our estimate of the Bible as the Word of God, and as our invaluable treasury and armory, we would yet exalt to His rightful place of control the Holy Spirit who gave it, without whom it cannot be understood, who has yet wondrous things to disclose out of it, and still more wondrous things of which He may have only given us there the germs.

Long prescribed creeds create an atmosphere in the church stifling to the Spirit. She has yet to learn the full meaning of that injunction, "Quench not the Spirit, Despise not prophesying."

CANONS FOR THE STUDY OF THE SCRIPTURES.

"That which I see not teach Thou me."—Job xxxiv. 32.

1. God's glory in the Lord Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega of the Scriptures, and that glory is inseparably bound up in the happiness of the universe; for God's

nature is Love, in which all His attributes are rooted and grounded; and a knowledge of Himself in Christ is indispensable to a right understanding of His words.—Jno. i. 18; xvii. 3.

2. Cultivate the most thorough-hearted sincerity in surrendering the mind and will unto God; and examine every doctrine on natural and spiritual things that you have been taught to accept, and about which the Scriptures speak; keeping the mind open for any truth He may see fit to reveal through them; and beware of being warped by theological systems, for truth is harmonious and expansive, and can stand the most searching tests; and our forefathers and teachers did not know everything, any more than we ourselves.—Jno. vii. 17.

3. Continually seek the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit; for though at present we lack, through unbelief, His living Voice and also His gifts demonstrating His presence in the assembly of Christ's members, yet all that we can gather of truth through His word must be by His aid. 1 Cor. ii, 9–11.

4. Seek for wisdom "rightly to divide the word of truth." "Distinguish the periods and the Scriptures will agree," was one of the wisest maxims outside of the Scriptures, uttered by a Latin Father towards their right interpretation; for Truth misplaced, or Prophecy misapplied is the source of the greatest error and confusion; and forget not that Resurrection is the key that opens the great future of prophetic promises of restoration to life and honor.—2 Tim. ii, 15; Gen. iii, 15.

5. No doctrine is set forth only or merely by inference, figure or parable; nor is any truth isolated and not found

elsewhere in the word. The truth, I take it, runs more or less through the whole of the Scriptures, even as minerals and gems do through the earth.—2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

6. Let the Word define and explain its own terms and figures; and keep to the natural clear and proper meaning and usage of language; taking care that the figurative must not be made to sustain a sense at variance with the literal, and no difficult passage be so construed as to contradict a plain one on a similar subject; for the Scriptures, both old and new, are in harmony with each other, and contain within themselves the solvent of all hard texts; while underneath their historical facts, many of which appear singular and too simple for a Divine historian to record, lie hidden dispensational truths and mysteries which will yet be seen when our eyes are opened.—Jer. xxxiii. 3 (Margin.) Gal. iv. 24.

7. Whatever of truth you gather, receive it with humility, maintain it with gentleness, own it with boldness, use it with wisdom, sow it with patience, await God's time for results, and remember that for every ray of light we receive, we need seven rays of love in order to hold it and use it aright.—1 Cor. xiii. 13.

And now fare ye well! I have not written as one who himself possesses in excellence all these various attainments and qualities that I have mentioned in these remarks; but rather as one who from some little experience and observation has seen and felt their value. I am somewhat like some poorly clad man who knows what good cloth is, and also the comely appearance which a good and well fitting garment made thereof gives to a wearer, rather more by comparison of his own poor material, than by possession;

and so I have done my best to recommend the cloth and the clothier, who alone can make it to be of good service to the wearer, and of honor to His name.

REV. W. BROOKMAN,
In The Restitution.

DUTY OF MINISTERS.

The conscience becomes restless when it desires to progress Godward; and to stifle it, from fear of consequences, or lest some worse evil may befall by obeying it than by disobeying it, is not merely an act of weakness and timdity, but it is a deliberate insult flung into the face of the Almighty.

Those who, perceiving the glaring evils attached to the ecclesiastical system with which they are connected, are impelled by their conscience to believe that they can best remedy those evils by remaining within its pale, and working for its reform from within, are bound to follow that guidance; and may rest satisfied that in doing so they are carrying out the will of God, as certainly as others to whom a different message is conveyed by the same still small voice: both may be the voice of God, though the message to each may be different—for abuses may be attacked from within as effectively as from without. But those who feel called to quit their present form of ministry, need not fear that another will not be provided for them, where each aspiration will be responded to by the inspiration appropriate to it, and every prayer for guidance be answered by the revelation of a duty, involving prompt

and unhesitating performance. It is not the finding out what God desires to be done, which is difficult—it is the doing of it. If the path is rugged and narrow and dangerous, and beset with snares and pitfalls, there is never any lack of light upon it to him who knows in what quarter to look for it: for the light of the world is shining more gloriously than ever to those who wait for its appearing; and there is again a star shining in the East, to guide wise men to the cradle of a new birth of divine life into the world.—*Laurence Oliphant.*

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

NEAR THE CLOSE.—As we are drawing near to the close of another volume of this magazine, we have to say to our friends and readers that, although the work still demands sacrifice, we have an increasing conviction of its importance, and that it ought not to be abandoned. It was through the encouragement and aid given to the work a year ago by some of its friends that we decided to go on with it. For their fellowship with us in it we are grateful to them and thankful to God. We believe that in the breaking up of old opinions upon the important subjects discussed in these pages, and in the inevitable re-formation of the church's faith concerning them, we have a special word to say which finds no other utterance, and that we who have been led into the light of this gospel of "hope toward God" have a special call to hold aloft the torch of this hope above the surrounding darkness concerning the future, in which so many of our brethren are groping. We therefore propose, by God's help, to go on with this publication. And we shall still hope that He will raise up an increasing number of those who will discern its mission and rally to its support.

ITERATION.—If some of our readers are disposed to criticize us for a frequent repetition of the same arguments in these pages, we beg them to remember that we make a special effort to reach new readers with each number of the magazine, to whom the whole subject is new.

We remember hearing a story of a good old country minister who was not thought to be much of a preacher, and whose sermons were said to be a constant iteration from this one text—"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life." "But then" added the speaker, "he preached that text so often all over the county that he got everybody to believe it." So we desire to din this gospel of "the hope and resurrection of the dead" into the ears of a church long deaf to it until we can get everybody to believe it.

A JUST RULE.—It is a just rule of interpretation that whenever you find a great principle running through the Scriptures, underlying the whole scheme of redemption which they unfold, isolated passages which seem to run counter to it must be subordinated thereto. Such a principle is, that there is hope for the dead through the resurrection of the dead. Passages which seem to teach that death ends all hope must yield to this. And this they readily do, as soon as it is perceived that these passages properly relate to the penalties to be visited for sin *before* resurrection.

THE REAL ISSUE.—The prime trouble with the Westminster Confession lies in the fact that it makes the whole of God's effort to save men to end with their death, and gives no hope whatever for heathen or any class of men dying in sin. It contains no glimpse of the gospel of the resurrection. The present discussion over phrases about election, elect infants, reprobation, etc., only raises a dust which obscures the real issue. Every leading church in Christendom is to-day more or less profoundly exercised over this great question of future punishment and of hope for the dead. Foremost minds in every denomina-

tion are repudiating the old doctrine of endless torments in hell for all but the elect. To face this issue must the Presbyterian Church sooner or later be brought.

DR. SHEDD believes that all unregenerate persons are everlastingly damned. In his recent article against revision, he further states that the reason why any man is elected to regeneration is not foreseen character, but the sovereign pleasure of God, and quotes in proof St. Paul's words about Jacob and Esau (Rom. ix. 11-13). His statement of the principle upon which Esau was "hated" is correct enough, but what an inference that he was therefore left to be eternally damned! Has Dr. Shedd never read in the old Testament that a lower blessing was bestowed even upon Esau (Gen. xvii. 37-40)? And is he blind to the fact that the apostle a little later in his argument (ch. xi) expressly teaches that God's reprobation of those whom He passes by is not final and eternal? "He has shut up all unto disobedience that He might have mercy upon all."

No doubt there is an election of grace, but it is only by the shameful perversion of such texts, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated," that they can be made to bolster up the doctrine of the eternal damnation of the non-elect. And he is a blind leader of the blind who undertakes to induct his fellow-Christians into these mysteries, assuming that the blessing of their election terminates upon themselves, and that no later and lower blessing for the non-elect is couched in the gracious decree by which they were chosen. We commend to him a candid meditation upon Hebrews xi. 20, "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob *and Esau* concerning things to come."

EXTRACT FROM ALBERT BARNES.—Dr. Shedd would have us believe that a confession which such men as Albert Barnes and Dr. Charles Hodge could heartily accept ought to satisfy us. And yet Albert Barnes near the close of his life wrote as follows:

These and a hundred difficulties meet the mind, when we think on this great subject; and they meet us when we endeavor to urge our fellow-sinners to be reconciled to God, and to put confidence in Him. I confess for one that I feel these, and feel

them more sensibly and powerfully the more I look at them, and the longer I live. I do not know that I have a ray of light on this subject, which I had not when the subject first flashed across my soul. I have read to some extent what wise and good men have written. I have looked at their theories and explanations. I have endeavored to weigh their arguments, for my whole soul pants for relief on these questions. But I get neither; and in the distress and anguish of my own spirit, I confess that I see no light whatever. I see not one ray to disclose to me the reason why sin came into the world, why the earth is strewed with the dying and the dead, and why man must suffer to all eternity.

CALVINISM, in framing its doctrine of election and damnation, sees but one class of texts, *e. g.*, Rom. ix. 13, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."

The gospel of the resurrection takes in both this class and another—which must be viewed alongside of it in order to the proper understanding of either, *e. g.*, Heb. x 20. "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob *and Esau* concerning things to come."

PROBATION.—In the *Faithful Witness* for October there is an article by the Rev. A. T. Pierson, D.D., upon this subject which contains some strange inconsistencies. He starts out with a principle, in which we agree with him, that properly speaking the human race is not now under probation. "Man has no state of trial left him. He has been tried and found dreadfully wanting and condemned." What he means by this is that the human race, as on trial in Adam for immortal life, failed, and is adjudged to death. Upon this he proceeds, however, to base this bold assertion:

This whole speculation about a probation after death is, in my judgment, the most magnificent trifling ever known on the face of the earth with spiritual things.

Are we then to conclude that the vast majority of men who have lived up to this time have been consigned to the agonies of an endless hell because they failed in Adam, and that too without any opportunity to lay hold by faith of salvation in Christ, of whom they never heard? They have not been put upon per-

sonal trial for life here; Dr. Pierson tells us it is "magnificent trifling" to tell us that they will be hereafter. And yet Dr. Pierson is obliged to assume, in order to justify their condemnation, that men are on trial here under the gospel. He speaks about the emphasis the Bible puts upon "*present* opportunity and *present* proclamation." "Death fixes a limit to our opportunity."

According to his view, then, men who hear the gospel are put under a probation as to whether they will embrace its opportunity of salvation. But to the vast mass of mankind no such opportunity has come in this life, and it is "magnificent trifling" to suppose that a just and gracious God will ever give these multitudes dragged down to death by Adam's failure a chance for life! If so, why are they to be raised from the dead? If Dr. Pierson did but know it, he himself is trifling with the terms "life" and "death" and "resurrection," and with the prime verity of the gospel that "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." He ought to know that the wages of sin is death, and that another gift of life bestowed under an economy of redemption is necessarily another opportunity.

THE *Herald of Life* makes what seems to us a disingenuous attempt to connect the view of demoniac powers, as set forth in "The Fire of God's Anger," with the Salem witchcraft delusion. As well attempt to make the Scripture injunction to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints responsible for the Spanish Inquisition. We recommend to our critic's attention an article in the October number of the *Faithful Witness* upon "*The Demonology of Scripture*," by the Rev. A. T. Pierson, D.D.

THE AMERICAN BOARD.—It is a significant fact that, at the late meeting of the Board held in New York, it appeared that from all the Congregational Seminaries of New England only two young men had offered themselves within the year for foreign missions. Even *The Congregationalist*, which has heretofore supported the Prudential Committee in their rejection of any young man who

is not willing to decisively commit himself against any and all forms of the larger hope, is beginning to weaken, and to demand that the cause of this reluctance of young men to offer themselves be probed to the bottom, and that no harsher policy on this subject shall be pursued than that indicated in the irenical address of Dr. Storrs on his acceptance of the Presidency of the Board a year ago.

It is plain that the church of the future cannot be held to the traditions of the past on this subject, and that it will not be long before the larger hope will enter vitally into her faith and labors for the salvation of mankind. We hope that soon she will learn to connect this hope with the "hope toward God" which Paul preached "that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust."

ANOTHER LETTER FROM A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER.

REV. L. C. BAKER,

Dear Brother:—I thank you heartily for inserting my recent remarks respecting the revision of the confession of faith in your valued magazine.

You see as well as I that the call for revision is very general throughout the church. But the precise point, where the difficulty is and how to meet it, is for many hard to find. I believe with you that the *heart* of the trouble rests in the *perverted view* of *God's end in resurrection.* This *redemptive character of resurrection* meets all the dark and hard problems about which the human mind is troubled and restless. The business of revision will not be accomplished in so short a time as some suppose. I have no doubt that great commotion will yet grow out of it. You seem not to apprehend the danger of *fixed* creeds as I do, but you certainly observe the great gulfs of division in the true Christian Church that are caused mainly by parties in the

church who, by assuming authority, are insisting that their view must be accepted or the communion left. How broad, on the other hand, is the basis of fellowship as expressed by the apostle John. "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God" (1 John iv. 2). John's creed was certainly much wider than those of modern times, though his faith was purer.

I am disgusted with prescribed human creeds.

Timothy made *a good confession* before many witnesses. Does any one know what it was? If we needed a formulated confession as an essential necessity for the unity and growth of the Church of Christ, the Apostles would have been the best qualified to formulate one. But they have not done so; and we should follow them, calling no one Master but Christ.

What sad results does this creed business produce in our mission fields! There it is that we notice as in an object lesson our entirely wrong attitude toward human creeds. I believe this is one of the greatest drawbacks in mission work. God speed the day when the confusion of Babylon will be superseded by the outpouring of God's Spirit—to make the church again of one heart and mind. Then the church will be a power, whereas now it is weak, being divided, and resting more on human wisdom than on God's word.

Do you also know, my dear brother, where you find the greatest opposition to the glorious doctrine of redemptive resurrection?

It is from the creeds that now exist and *rule* the mind of the church. The Bible plainly teaches this blessed truth, but the creeds unanimously ignore or reject it. Do not, therefore, these traditions set aside the word of God as in old time? Seldom is a man or teacher tried for heresy by Bible tests, but by the creeds. This was the experience of Huss and Luther and many others down to our time. The question is mainly: Is this in accordance with the "accepted confession of faith"?

I have, therefore, this objection to creeds *as rules:* 1. They do not accomplish the ends for which they are formulated, failing to have *intrinsic* authority; and 2. They become a weapon for

tyranny and a hindrance to progress in the knowledge of revealed truth.

Did ever a man dream that he could make a suit for his son to last a lifetime? The vital principle of growth under which the church as a body is developing to manhood in Christ is ignored by *fixed* creeds.

Now, my dear brother, though I speak so strongly my convictions in regard to this point, yet I can assure you that I can embrace in love and brotherly fellowship all the brethren who differ from me in this or many other points. I do not desire to rule. We must be able to bear with each other's real or supposed infirmities. "To contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" does certainly not mean to insist upon one's own opinion of certain truth and to unchurch those differing, it they do not submit. It does not mean to enforce an opinion by a *majority vote*. Voting is not at all recognized in the Bible. It is an anti-Christian expedient in my view. Christ is king, and His office-bearers have only to execute His laws, and not to formulate their own. This sounds radical, but I mean it honestly, though I may err. I can, thank God, love my opponents, and I need not to unchurch them, as some do on the other side. As long as I trust in Christ alone and lead people to Him alone, I have the apostolic mark of a Christian minister, and can testify with joy, though some might think I deserve to be bound "for the hope of Israel," Acts xxviii. 20.

Be encouraged, dear brother, the Lord makes good all His promises. Just cling to the Bible and labor on. The foundation stones are the heaviest to handle; but they must first be laid, before others can build thereupon. "The larger hope *has come to stay.*" The *redemptive character of resurrection* is becoming more and more recognized as the sun of truth rises. God bless your efforts!

You will therefore see that, from my standpoint, I do not object to creeds as a *testimony*, but simply to *fixed Standards* that shut out any shade of difference and preclude investigation and development in the understanding of the truth.

WORDS OF RECONCILIATION.

VOL. V.] DECEMBER, 1889. [NO. 12.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

We shall bind up one hundred copies of volume V., as was done in the case of previous volumes. The price will be one dollar. To any subscriber this, or any one of the volumes, will be sent with the magazine for $1.50; or the whole series of five will be sent for $3 (postage paid), or with the magazine for $3.50. We hope many of our subscribers will want the work in this permanent form. The price does not pay the cost to us, and yet they will greatly aid us by ordering and giving circulation to these volumes. For fifty cents in addition to these prices, we will send a copy of either "The Fire of God's Anger," or of "The Mystery of Creation and of Man." We beg our friends to remember that the preaching of this gospel of the resurreetion is in no sense a money-making enterprise. It was undertaken and must be sustained as a charitable work. Those who believe it to be such should consider whether they cannot do something to promote the circulation of this magazine, either by procuring subscribers, or contributing for its free distribution among those who need to know that neglected part of the gospel to which it testifies. We print a monthly edition of 750

copies. Less than half of these go to regular subscribers. The remaining copies are scattered far and wide among those who are most likely to profit by them. We are thus candid with our readers in making known the condition and needs of this work. If any have doubts whether it be of God, they have no call to sustain it. But for those who believe it to be of Him, we know of no more important and fruitful field for their co-operative efforts and gifts than is here offered to them.

CLOSE OF ANOTHER VOLUME.

With this number another volume of this magazine is closed, and another year's labor in the lonesome field to which we have been assigned, as we firmly believe by the Master of all souls, is ended. We speak of it as lonesome because, although it has warm friends and their number is increasing, they are few and widely scattered, while those whom we reach in the existing churches either look upon it with suspicion, or, having more or less sympathy with its wider hopes, do not see their way clear to express it. It has been a period of silent seed-sowing, unrewarded save by the conviction that the Lord of the harvest sees, and will in due time bring blessing to both sower and reaper from whatever is sown of the seed of His eternal Word. All else we know must go into the fire.

But we do not measure the extent of the influence of this magazine by the list of its subscribers. It has been, from the first, widely and gratuitously distributed. A few earnest friends have aided us in doing this. Nor are we

discouraged by the silence with which the church has so far received our new version of the gospel. We believe that, while not accepting, many of our brethren do not see how it can be given a flat denial: and therefore they receive it in silence. We know that many of them are pondering it in their hearts. We ourselves believe that, if not the final solution of the perplexing situation in which the church now finds herself in respect to the grave problems of the future, it is pointing out the only path along which the solution lies.

We cannot therefore yet abandon this work. In the present ferment of the church, and especially the Presbyterian Church, over this subject, we must still make our voice heard, because we believe we are pointing out the only ground upon which our bewildered brethren can plant their feet. There is no possible standing ground, either in logic or in Scripture, between the severest statements of the Westminster Confession about reprobation and the everlasting torment of the wicked in the unceasing fires of hell, and our position that there is hope for the dead—even the unjust—in the purpose of God to raise the dead. Our drifting brethren are seeking to find refuge along the way, in universal infant salvation, in the salvability of devout heathen—even in a possible extension of mercy to some classes in the "middle state;" or they are clothing the harsh terms of their doctrine in emollient phrases, if perchance they may smooth over their difficulty and heal their hurt slightly. But they will find no rest until they reach the solid ground of these two commanding principles;—The wages of sin is death: Resurrection, as the recovery of the dead to life, is an opening of the prison

doors to them that are bound, and is a gracious act. All the retributive teaching of Scripture, including its doctrine of hell and the eternal fire, must be gathered under the first principle. All its doctrine of hope must be ranged under the second principle. If there be any hope for any class of the dead—even for dead infants and devout heathen—it must connect itself with the promise of God to raise the dead. Even the present hope of the Christian is in his experience of "the power of His resurrection."

Who would have thought that before two years had passed, after we were constrained to leave the Presbyterian Church because of protest against defects in its eschatology, made more dark and cruel than the grave for utter lack of any light of "hope toward God" (except for the elect) in His provision to raise the dead, that that church would now be in the birth-pangs of a revolution over this very Confession?

We cannot, therefore, abandon our post at this time. We have begun to see the passing away of the old order in theology. We want to aid in the formation of the new order by a "word of reconciliation" that shall hold fast to what is good and true, and yet open the way for something larger and better in the future—a word that shall give men something to anchor by in the general drift, that shall save them from loss of faith in the Bible as the Word of the living God, by showing them how much better and more truly divine is its revelation of Him than they had supposed—a word to make men love the Bible more because of its deeper human sympathies and larger human hopes, and that shall bind the Church more truly into one by pointing out the goal toward which humanity is tending,

and her high calling as the light of the world in its progress toward this goal—the chosen seed of blessing to all the families of the earth, who shall show the wonders of His grace even to the dead.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

The close of another year of labor upon this magazine is a time for serious reflection. It occurs to us that we can spend it in no more profitable way, than by a candid treatment of the objections to this work which naturally arise in the minds of Christians, educated in the old beliefs, and which we often have to meet. We are sensible of the great responsibility assumed by one who opposes himself to the long-cherished opinions of his brethren upon so vital a matter as future punishment, and that no one is justified in taking such a step without the most weighty reasons. We have at different times set forth these reasons. We now propose to take up some of the most obvious objections to the mission of this magazine, and to give them a candid consideration.

Objection I.—The doctrine you teach is a novelty. Is it likely that you are wiser than the whole Church which, with almost one consent, has believed for centuries in the everlasting punishment of the wicked?

All new and larger views of truth are novelties. The law of growth in the Church toward perfection, is a law of growth in knowledge. The Scriptures lead us to expect this, and provide for it. Consent in the old doctrine has never been universal. There has always been below the

surface a broad undercurrent of dissent. And just now upon the surface it appears as a resistless tide. Moreover, the Church has often and long acquiesced in the gravest errors. Witness the false conceptions of Messianic prophecy which everywhere prevailed at the time of Christ, and the false notions cherished in the minds of even His own disciples up to the time of His resurrection. General consent would prove all the Papal dogmas, and Galileo a dangerous innovator.

Objection II.—Any holding out of hope for sinful men beyond the grave diminishes the importance of present opportunities, makes men careless, and is dangerous to souls.

We hold out no hope for sinful men, this side the grave or beyond it, so long as they remain sinful. Our doctrine merely represents the attitude of God toward sinners as the same in all worlds. Toward that nature in them which is sinful, He is ever a consuming fire. Toward the prodigal, whose substance is all wasted even in the far country of death, He is ever ready to turn in grace. Right views of God can never be dangerous to men's souls.

The objection about present opportunities arises mainly from a misconception of our doctrine. Some persons have charged us with denying future punishment. Nothing is further from our thoughts. We believe this most profoundly—"Be sure your sin will find you out." Both in this life and beyond it, God's unchanging law is, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," "He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption." We have only to look around us to be convinced of the reality of hell. We believe moreover that in a most important sense the oppor-

tunities of this present life are final—that I am endowed with a present gift of embodied life which is to be saved or lost here and now. I may save my "soul" my "self" through faith in and obedience to Christ and so "never taste death," or I may lose myself and be cast away. Just along the borders of this present life there yawns a hell in which the bodies and souls of wicked men are consumed. The only opportunity to escape this doom is in this life. We believe that such lost ones remain fast locked in this prison-house of death, until each, in his own time and order, shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth, and that in the resurrection men are rehabilitated in degree and order of life according to character. To many the new life must begin, despoiled of all the treasures of the former life, in some cases its continuity impaired it may be to the verge of loss of personality. And yet life, even despoiled and in jeopardy of a second death, is better than bondage in death and hell. For while there is no hope in death, "while there is life, there is hope," and resurrection is the recovery of the dead to life.

Here then we have the elements of a doctrine of future punishment more rational, more true to conscience and to Scripture and to the laws of character and life, and yet full of the terror of the Lord. Hence it must prove a more effective deterrent from sin and incentive to seek to be saved from it, than the current doctrine of an eternal hell—a conception so monstrous and so opposed to the underlying idea of God revealed in Scripture and in the human soul, that it cannot command intelligent assent, and so must fail of its effect.

Objection III.—Your doctrine tends to make Christians

less eager for the immediate salvation of their fellow men and of their own kindred.

Not if they understand it. There is always some danger in the breaking up of old ideas, even though false. Our doctrine is vastly less palliative in this respect than the prevalent doctrine of an intermediate state into which men may go with their destiny yet undetermined. We preach an immediate danger of the loss of the soul and of self, an impending hell on the borders of which men now tread, from the peril of which only an immediate salvation can rescue. We view men, therefore, as never more in need of salvation than they are now. And as for kindred, how could one be content to have them shipwrecked on this sea of life even though the hope be retained of finding them again after untold suffering on some distant and desert coast of life, shattered and stripped of all their former heritage. Moreover as to the necessity of present submission to Christ as indispensable to salvation, where modern orthodoxy is daily growing more weak, we grow more positive. We know of no way of eternal life except through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. And, therefore, we emphasize the necessity of imparting to men this knowledge. We hold also a very special view of the important place of the Church as the vehicle of this knowledge to lost men in this world and the next. For this priestly function she is fitted only as she comes into fellowship with Christ in His compassion and self-sacrifice for the souls of men. In this way only can she be baptized for either the living or the dead. We have only yet begun to discern how essential is the connection between our self-devotion and the salvation of

our fellowmen—especially of our own kindred according to the flesh. There is deep instruction for us in this matter in the law of the first born, as charged with the privilege and duty of redemption toward the later born. There are ranges of truth that open out of this principle of redemption through resurrection of which a chosen seed are the appointed channels, to make every member of this Christ-body to the last degree consecrated to the ends of his high calling.

Objection IV.—It cuts the nerve of missions.

The reply to this is very much in the line of what has been just said. We believe that even devout heathen must go down to death, if they know not Him who alone saves from death. But there is hope for the dead in the promise to raise the dead, and recompense for good character and devout living in a more speedy deliverance from death, and in the degree of emancipation that it brings. "They that have done good" find recompense at the resurrection of the just in a free entrance to the path that leads to life eternal. But still it remains true, for heathen and for sinners everywhere, that men must know Christ in order to be saved. Even Cornelius needed this. And it is further true that God's plan for blessing all the kindreds of the earth in this life, or in the resurrection, is through the choice out of them of an elect seed who are willing to be baptized with Christ's baptism for their brethren both living and dead. Missions have thus far been a feeble success, because this vital feature of the gospel of God's grace has been concealed. There has been no preaching of the gospel of the resurrection. The bearing of this race-redemption from death upon the dead genera-

tions of heathendom has been deplorably perverted. It has been made to appear that all these myriads were left out of God's plan, or were by it consigned to an eternal and hopeless hell. No wonder such a gospel has won few triumphs, and holds these with difficulty. It would not have won any if honestly preached. Our doctrine, instead of cutting the nerve of missions, is the very one for which the heathen world is waiting in order to make easy its conquest for Christ.

Objection V.—Despite all you say in reply, the doctrine is still plain in Scripture, and there is no escape from it: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

To say nothing here of a doubt whether the Lord used precisely this word "punishment," inasmuch as some of the old versions read here "fire," in which case the destructive idea is prominent, and not that of perpetuity in punishment, we reply that these words occur in the description of a judgment of the living nations of mankind, and not of dead men raised. They therefore do not set aside the original and uniform sentence by God upon man for sin, which is death. The eternal fire is not a superimposed sentence. It is His agent in executing the one sentence. No principle of interpretation is surer than this: if you can discover any great principle of divine dealing running through the Bible, any single passage must be subordinate to it. Such a principle is this, that in God's purpose to raise the dead there is hope for the dead. This passage, therefore, which is essentially the death-sentence pronounced by the Son of Man upon those not worthy to inherit His kingdom of life, cannot exclude these banished ones from such hope as may come to them

through resurrection. Viewed in its obvious and proper light, as the vision of a pre-resurrection judgment, the passage presents no difficulty. And it can have no weight at all to set aside the great and commanding principle that there is hope for the dead in the resurrection of the dead (Acts xxiii. 6; xxiv. 15; xxvi. 6–9).

HOW WE WOULD PREACH THE GOSPEL.

A decisive objection in many minds to any surrender of the doctrine of endless punishment is, that it would take the stress out of one of the chief motives by which men are persuaded to seek salvation. Our main answer to this is, that men must be drawn to God by that form of doctrine which most truly represents Him: otherwise the God they believe in is not the true God. Immense power over the minds of men may be wielded by monstrous ideas of God, as under all false religions. And when these ideas begin to fade away before Christianity, as is the case, for instance, in India and Japan, infidelity to all religion is the indirect result in many minds. No one, however, would argue that Christianity should therefore be withheld. So, if in some minds there be a temporary weakening of the bonds of religious faith through this exposure of falseness in some of its appeals, this gives no valid reason why this falsity should not be confessed and forsaken. During the times of medieval ignorance the masses were held in check by the most realistic conceptions of a lake of fire filled with torturing devils. Modern Christianity has not hesitated to abandon these conceptions, because of a possible

weakening of its hold upon ignorant minds. Nor should it now hesitate to admit into its conception of God's method of dealing with mankind this principle of the redemptive character of resurrection, provided it be true.

But without pausing to say what could be further said in answer to this objection, we desire to draw an outline of the mode in which we would preach the gospel, if God in His good providence should again give us opportunity.

1. We would lay great stress upon the natural sinfulness of man. While holding to the essential dignity of human nature as derived from God, and its boundless possibilities, we would emphasize the fact that, *as now constituted,* it is both unworthy and incapable of the kingdom of God.

2. We would warn men that the wages of sin is death; that, because of it, the life of the human race and of each individual is bound over to death. We would seek to recover from its obscuration this original and uniform sentence of God upon man for sin. For death in modern preaching no longer means the loss of that embodied life with which man is endowed, but only its degradation and torment. It is assumed that men are inherently immortal and can never lose life. We admit that there is an immortal spirit in man that can never die. But that spirit is not man. Man is the immortal spirit of life *embodied* in separate personality. This embodiment includes more than the outer material frame. There is a living soul behind this which is also substantial—which survives the death of the material body, but which may also be destroyed in hell. The *man* then ceases to be. And yet a ghost of his former self, which can hardly be said to retain his conscious per-

sonality, must remain; otherwise there could be no resurrection. Resurrection we take to be the recovery of men thus dead to another habiliment and standing in life.

This definite destruction in death and hell then we would hold before the sinner as the appointed penalty of sin, and as his impending peril. It is the dissolution inevitable in the case of every man whose personal being is not reconstituted in Christ. In the language of Scripture we would warn men that they are in immediate danger of losing their lives, their souls, themselves. And we would show them that this is not a remote sentence to be inflicted after a distant judgment day, but that they are now under this condemnation, that the destructive fires of this hell are already kindled within them, that, not a distant Gehenna, but a present hell yawns to receive them, that they are now treading on its borders and that, like Dives, they may at any time be engulfed in its torments.

3. We would therefore gather all the Scripture teaching about hell and the eternal fire under this primitive idea of death—the death of body and soul—as the wages of sin. These mighty destructive forces to which Scripture gives these fearful names are merely God's agents in inflicting His original sentence. Any other view introduces hopeless confusion into our ideas of the divine government.

4. Beyond this definite and immediate destruction in death and hell, we would set forth also that even the resurrection out of it which the grace of God has provided for all men must proceed according to His harvest-law: "To every seed his own body." The time of every man's deliverance, the order of life in manhood to which he is raised, must all be graded according to character. Men who now

fail to receive Christ, and to escape death through the power of His resurrection, cannot of course be raised in His heavenly manhood. They must be still earthy, and come more or less under the yoke of previous evil character. "They that have done ill" can receive only the "resurrection of judgment" (R. V. Jno. v. 29). They must be kept under corrective restraint, and if sin has so far done its deadly work in them as to remain unpardonable (Scripture knows of but one form of sin that is unpardonable), or if they prove under further trial incorrigible, there remains nothing but that death shall do upon them its final work. This we believe to be that second death beyond which no promise is given of a second resurrection.

5. Now from all this peril of death, and these hazards of even a future opportunity in life, we would preach Christ fervently as the Power of God and the Wisdom of God unto Salvation, the Resurrection and the Life, in whom believing, even though a man be dead, yet shall he live. In Him we see God taking hold of human nature, first to ransom it from the death it has deserved, and then to renew and transform it by the indwelling of His own divine nature. This is His way of immortalizing man, of giving him eternal Life. We would show men how they may now lay hold of this life, and so through the crisis of death save their souls alive, resurrection being begun in them even before they pass its portals. And we would emphasize the present as the only opportunity for this escape from death. All the Scriptures which speak of men as perishing and in danger of destruction we would use in their full and proper import, and point men to

Christ as given of God that men might not perish, but have eternal life.

6. We would preach, however, that even where men lose their lives under the operation of this consuming fire of God, and even though they must go down as captives into death and hell, His grace does not forsake them. He has provided, after the appointed penalty, and the visitation of His death-sentence upon them, to take up their case again through a resurrection from the dead. He does not mean to be defeated by even the last enemy, death. And so through Christ shall all be made alive, every one in his own order. Nothing could be done with them as conceived in sin, except they had been reborn in Christ. Hence nothing is left but that they be taken to pieces, their being dissolved, with such suffering and loss as we have already referred to. Their Creator must begin with them anew. This is the meaning of this provision of resurrection, even for the unjust, for whom St. Paul finds room under his category of "hope toward God." It is an intervention of grace to prevent the death, which men must suffer for their sins under this present constitution of the world, from being final and eternal. All shall be made alive. But then, as we have seen, He can begin with men again only in accordance with His universal law of life that men must reap as they have sown—a law affecting both the time and the manner of their resurrection, and determining whether it be unto life set free to fulfil its destiny, or to life low down the scale where its possessor must still be kept in bonds and under judgment, with liability to a second death.

It will thus be observed that we all along hold fast to

the prime gospel verity that there is no life or salvation out of Christ, and that His salvation is essentially from sin, the organic curse of human lives, and that there is a most critical and decisive character to this present opportunity in life. For if men who now hear the gospel reject it, a loss of life in death and hell awaits them, from which there is no chance of escape in a feigned "middle state." Even in resurrection they remain under this eternal law of God's righteousness, that every one must receive in body according to deeds done, that only as Christ is formed in them can they be made righteous, and that, refusing to die out of self and to live unto God, they must go down into that lake of fire which shall purge all things, which is the second death.

Men will thus see that God is dealing with them in this matter of sin after no arbitrary fashion or in changing moods of righteousness and grace, loving men to-day and hating them to-morrow. They will see that in this matter of life and death they are under the operation of eternal laws that are the same through all the phases of their being in this world and the next. They will see that under this law there is no possible hope or escape for them in their sins, and that their highest wisdom and safety is to at once receive Christ, and so be transformed from this whole region where sin works in them unto death into that in which grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

But beyond all this, there still remains a class of motives by which men, especially the heathen, may be addressed, namely, those which arise from the law, now concealed in gospel preaching, that the human race, and espe-

cially its separate kindreds, are so bound together by organic ties that those who now yield themselves to Christ for salvation become instruments of blessing to their kindred and to the race; and not only to the living, but hereafter to the dead. The first born from the dead in God's great harvest of life, they become the channel through which the power of His resurrection shall reach the later born. Nothing is more defective in the modern conception of the gospel than its extreme individualism. The great organic relations of this salvation to all the kindreds of the earth and to the race at large are lost sight of. Men need to read again out of Scripture the law of the first born, and the place in God's plan of the church of the first born. This defective view of this plan is directly due to the fact that the race-hope in resurrection has been lost out of the gospel. Indeed, to the vast mass who have thus far lived and died, the resurrection becomes an unutterable curse.

Now under the true gospel men are invited to be partakers of Christ, not only for their individual salvation, but that, having fellowship with Him in His self-sacrifice, they may become channels of His salvation, not only to the living, but be baptized with Him for the dead. Here is a new motive to put into the gospel as it is carried to the heathen, who refuse to accept a faith that consigns all their ancestors to eternal despair. They would see, that it invites them to share in the life and saving mission of the Anointed Saviour of the world through whom all the kindreds of the earth are to be blessed, and that, however lost to sight or held bound by the last great enemy, in God's sight and loving purpose, the dead are a part of the all.

But they would also see, that His grace can reach them only through the human channel of self-consecrated lives who are willing to suffer with Christ that they may reign with Him in those administrations by which He shall put all things under His feet and destroy the last enemy, which is death.

But even where men fall short of embracing this high calling of God, our gospel would still leave room for urging them to the highest forms of humane and upright living which, while it cannot itself secure eternal life, must yet bring its recompense at the resurrection of the just. In our view the just are not "the saints" who are already risen with Christ, and are passed out of death into life; they are the good and devout of every land and nation who, failing of it now, shall yet enter into life eternal after their release from the bonds of death through resurrection. Most of the Old Testament teaching, and large parts of Christ's own words, which speak of good and merciful character as sure to meet its recompense, have been eliminated from the gospel because of a supposed necessity for cramping all this teaching within the limits of the doctrine of justification by faith. Men have failed to see, while the just shall live by faith, that the predominance of good character which marks them as just prepares them to receive this life by faith. And hence at the resurrection of the just (a different class from the saints) such come forth to a resurrection which makes their entrance into life an easy one, and so find their recompense. It needs to be known that all men who hear the gospel are not called to be saints. The self-crucifixion which marks the saints in Christ Jesus is something for which all men—even some good men—

are not prepared. Many may be called, but few are chosen. But all men are capable of developing human kindness and charity, honesty and uprightness. Now the gospel of Christ has its encouragement and reward for these also—a lower order of salvation. Such do not inherit the blessing of those who are now alive in Christ. They cannot escape death. But they are promised a more speedy and hopeful deliverance than other men, while evil doers must remain in the congregation of the dead, and come forth to only the resurrection of judgment. Here then, there are wide regions of motive, and ranges of blessing, and opportunities for cultivating just and kindly relations between man and man, and for training of young and old in habits of unselfishness, for which the current gospel can make no consistent place, because it fails to see in the diversified future which a redemptive resurrection opens before the human race, that there is room for every variety of destiny and the exact reward of every man according to his works. In the Westminster Confession, for example, only two destinies for mankind are conceived of, the one, the saints on the pinnacle of glory and blessedness, the other, the unjust, writhing ceaselessly in the agonies of an endless hell.

SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY.

The Unitarian Conference recently held in this city was in nothing conspicuous, if not in its demand for a scientific theology. By this it means a theology that shall satisfy the demands of reason and conscience, and of what we are

taught, both in Scripture and in Creation, of the nature of God and the methods of His working. No one can object to this. No class of Christians can long be satisfied with any other kind of theology. The disturbance in some of the camps of orthodoxy is due to the discovery that for some of their dogmas there is no longer any place in such a system.

It may well be questioned, however, whether the mission of the Unitarians is to discover for the Church such a theology. They have been of some use in exposing entrenched errors. They have emphasized the truth, often overlooked, that that theology must be the best which produces the best results in human character. But in their anxiety to get rid of the encumbrances of the past, they are too presumptuous and hasty when they ask us to accept their own explanations of Christian doctrine—of the divine nature, of inspiration, of miracles, and of resurrection, as the true scientific substitutes. We have just been reading a book called "Scientific Religion," by Laurence Oliphant. Mr. Oliphant would be classed as a Unitarian, so far as his views upon the divinity and atonement of Christ are concerned. He is even more non-ecclesiastical than are they. And yet he holds to miracles, to the miraculous conception, to the extraordinary acts of healing and of the control of natural forces by Jesus, even to the raising of the dead and the feeding of hungry multitudes. And yet he puts in even a higher claim than our Unitarian friends to be scientific. He holds, and rightly we believe, that there are hidden realms of substance and of force in this created system which bridge over the chasm between matter and spirit; that nature is alive with unseen spiritual forces; that

the fall of man and the drama of human history is but the counterpart of realities first enacted in the unseen spiritual world; that therefore there are concealed energies and potencies in this system of things which will account for all that seems to us supernatural, and which make possible not only the wonders of the past, but more wonders in the future than have yet been dreamed of in our philosophy. He affirms, that it is equally scientific and scriptural to look for that opening of the heavens toward which the ascended Saviour directed the faith of His disciples, and for which the Church, with varying fidelity, has ever been looking. We do not by any means endorse all Mr. Oliphant's explanations of these mysteries of the past or future. We only call attention to the fact that he shows how they may all be in accord with the best results of science, and that even science herself conducts us to a border-land from which we get glimpses across into a realm of spirit which leave us no longer in doubt of its reality. We have long held the conviction that "things invisible" are just as truly a part of this system of creation as "things visible," and that the whole mystery of creation and of man is hidden in Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that science was only half-knowledge so long as it dealt only with such facts and forces of nature as it could see and handle. There is a whole realm of divine science below these phenomena. And therefore the unorthodox Mr. Oliphant, who recognizes this, is a safer guide, with all his aberrations, to a scientific theology, than are such leaders as Messrs. Abbott and Savage, who begin by asking us to surrender all that element in the Christian faith which they deem supernatural, and which cannot verify its claim

at the bar of modern science. Are there then no heights and depths of being which science has not yet explored? Is she competent to dictate to us the last word about these mysteries of our holy faith? She is confessedly herself only knocking at the gates of this unseen realm of life. Yes, let us have by all means a theology that is scientific, but not one dictated to us by only a partial science, and whose claim to infallibility is all along being disproved. There are atomic depths of being below us as immeasurable as the inter-stellar spaces above us. When science tells us that she sees no trace of angel or spirit in all these heights and depths, we bid her pause and wait. Perhaps the forces of nature she deals with may turn out to be instinct with life, and be ministering spirits at the very shrine at which she worships. The names which Scripture gives to these forces, "angels, principalities, and powers," may in the end be proved to be more deeply scientific than is her own nomenclature, when she speaks so confidently of "gravitation," "electricity," and so on to the end.

LETTER FROM THE REV. CHARLES BEECHER.

We are sure our readers will be glad to read the subjoined letter from a surviving brother of the late Henry Ward Beecher, who is himself also well known as having made very important contributions to modern theological thought. Some time ago he kindly sent us these works of his: *Redeemer and Redeemed, Spiritual Manifestations, The Eden Tableau.* We found them very suggestive of new thought and helpful. Where we could not follow, we

were compelled at least to pause and think with profit. Certainly any thoughtful reader would be convinced that that there are more wonders in heaven and earth than our current theology has yet dreamed of.

We offer Mr. Beecher's letter without comment. Such a man has a right to speak for himself.

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER: I read your WORDS OF RECONCILIATION with very great interest, and wish I were a millionaire to extend its circulation indefinitely.

The "Revision" discussion gives you a good opportunity, which I am glad to see you seize readily and skilfully.

There seem to be currents in the world's thought, unaccountable, uncontrollable—a sort of gulf-stream in the ocean, or monsoon in the atmosphere (a sort of *trade*-wind. No man buy or sell without a mark.)

What a tremendous set of the tide to asceticism in the early centuries!

What a gulf-stream for 1260 years—there or thereabout.

How little boats are swept along, or tossed about, or stranded high dry!

What tides are moving now, and whence and whither?

The great Presbyterian body travails in birth pangs, and, lo! a paragraph! a syllable expunged!

What a poor creature is man—under the spells and insults of the great *Kosmokrator*—who deceiveth the whole world!

And here now is this base and beastly scheme of evolution and all Israel gone a whoring after it!

Do we not need a new revelation? Here is this new high criticism—which takes the Bible to pieces like a Chinese puzzle. Who are J. and P. and E. and J. E.

and R.? Does J. stand for John, P. for Peter, and so on?*

O, no—we don't know who they were—and who R. was is no matter—nor when nor where they lived—only among them they manufactured the Bible.

And Moses?

O, Moses—? Well—. He didn't write the Pentateuch—that's all we know of him!

I wish the Lord Jesus would make haste and reveal the righteous judgment of God.

The discussion thus far on revision seems pretty kindly, and I watch it from afar, from my nook.

A little too much on the low level of political parties—shaping platforms for votes.

The highest feeling should be to unsay what we have said that is wrong about Our Father. He is very patient. But we have said things so wrong that the mountains should be cast into the sea.

The elect are elect to office (star differeth from star), elect to rank and station, elect to reign, and judge—.

All the rest are to be reigned over, or judged—in hades? No; in the resurrection—in natural but healthy bodies—when the gospel, and not some atrocious caricature, will be proclaimed to them. And all who have not in former

*As some of our readers may not understand the reference here, we may explain that, in the language of the Higher Criticism, "J" stands for "Jehovist," the unknown author to whom certain sections of the Bible characterized by the use of the Divine Name Jehovah are referred. "E" stands for "Elohist." "P" for the author of the Priest Code. "R" for a subsequent more than editor, a "Redactor" who digested the documents which came down from earlier hands, and reduced them to their present form. In the controversy as to the structure of the Bible we have not taken sides, for two reasons:—1. The matter is yet under investigation and the results not fully determined. 2. We have enough to occupy us in our own field of Biblical inquiry.

So far as the special views we advocate are concerned, they ask no support from a low view of the inspiration of the Bible. All that is needed is that it be rightly and symmetrically understood. And to this its scientific study will in the end contribute.

lives rendered themselves incurable (unpardonable sin) will embrace the Saviour.

There is one defect of the Confession that I have not seen alluded to, and that is the history and character of Satan.

The Confession and Catechism scarcely mention him. Yet how prominent in the New Testament!

"For this cause was the Son of God manifested"—to destroy him! Take the passages that distinctly state this—and think of a theory of atonement that does not even mention his name! If the brethren really want the Confession to conform to Scripture, they must *judge* the Prince of this World.

They must judge him correctly—for the Holy Spirit "will convince the world of judgment, because the Prince of this World is judged."

The Lord be with you, my brother, and give you grace and skill and favor with men, and an open door that no man can shut.

Yours in the faith and *patience* of the saints,

CHARLES BEECHER.

Wysox, Pa.

EXTRACT FROM REV. JOHN ROBINSON.

In his farewell address to the emigrants, John Robinson says:

"If God reveal anything to you by any other instrument of His, be as ready to receive it as ever you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded, I am very confident, that the Lord has more truth yet to break out of His holy Word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the reformed churches, who are come to a period in religion, and will go at

present no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans cannot be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; whatever part of His will our good God has revealed to Calvin, they would rather die than embrace it. And the Calvinists, you see, stick fast where they are left by that great man of God, who yet saw not all things."

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS.

NEW YORK PRESBYTERY.—We are glad to see, from the discussion in the New York Presbytery, that that the conviction is growing that the difficulties with the Westminster Confession are too radical to be met by the revision of a paragraph here and there. The demand is growing for a *new* creed that shall start from a new centre (Christocentric), and that shall light its way through the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Him less by the torch "God is Sovereign" and more by the torch, "This Sovereign God is Love."

DR. BRIGGS IN THE CHURCH UNION.—Dr. Briggs continues to handle the revision question in a bold and startling way. In the *Church Union* of October 31st he writes as follows:

It is clear that the heathen and their babes cannot be saved in accordance with the Westminster scheme of salvation. I have shown this at length in my recent book "Whither." I renew my challenge for any one to produce a Westminster divine who did not believe in the damnation of the heathen and their infants. Here the church is pinched by modern thought, and at this point there is grave anxiety for revision. But to my mind, the Westminster doctrine of the damnation of infants, with all its horrors, is much superior to the modern doctrine which saves them at the cost of the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone. It is no improvement in theology to unsettle the doctrine of justification by faith, and make the salvation of all men uncertain, for the sake of improving the chances of the babes. I cannot understand the complacency of that man who insists upon the universal salvation of babes, and

who also insists that their fathers and mothers and elder brothers and sisters, and all who have passed out of babyhood are lost forever in hellfire. I confess that I have little appreciation of a salvation that fails in its efforts to save the vast majority of intelligent persons and makes its great success in dealing with babes and incapables. If I read the Bible aright, it presents a redemption for men and women as well as babes. According to the current leaders of Orthodoxism, the twin brother among the heathen who died in infancy is to have certainty of salvation, while his twin who grew up to manhood and made the hard battle of life is certain to be lost forever in the fires of hell. I cannot find any such absurdities in the Word of God, or in the Westminster divines, or in the creeds of the Reformation. Modern Orthodoxism has come to this *reductio ad absurdum* which is repelling many of the best minds from the Christian Church. The Westminster divines made an advance in theology when they taught the regeneration of elect infants apart from the sacrament of baptism. We are forced to go still further than they, and open up the possibilities of faith and justification in the middle state. This path was not taken by the Westminster divines, but it was not closed by them, and is therefore open to us.

THE REV. M. J. SAVAGE, on the platform of the Unitarian Conference declared—as did Theodore Parker before him—that, though the doctrine of eternal torment were taught on every page of the Bible, he would not believe it, and would denounce it as a libel on God. Such assertions tend to break down men's faith in the Bible and in the authority of our Saviour's words. How much better to show that His words must have been misunderstood, inasmuch as the true teaching of the Bible concerning the "eternal fire" is, that it is the divine agent in executing upon men the uniform sentence of death for sin, and not something superadded to that sentence, and that the deepest fact of Scripture is the provision of a resurrection or restoration to life, *beyond* that sentence, of every man in his own order. It was from a failure to discover this redemptive value in resurrection, as an underlying principle in all Scripture, that so eminent a Christian and an interpreter as Tholuck could say, "Dogmatically I feel myself drawn toward Universalism, but exegetically, I can hardly justify that opinion." The truth about resurrection would have shown him that neither the

extreme of Universalism nor that of endless suffering is exegetically required, and that both sides of the truth of Scripture meet and harmonize in its doctrine of the gracious gift of another life for all men beyond the pit of death and hell—an universal salvation from death—while the issues of this new opportunity in life must still remain subject to the universal law that men must reap as they have sown, and without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

No truth is of more value in our day in holding men to a firm anchorage of faith in the Scriptures than this truth of the redemptive character of resurrection.

CHURCH UNION.—The action of the American Board at its last meeting is rather discouraging to those who were hoping for church union in Japan. But little was done at the last General Convention of the Episcopal Church in advance of previous action. The most hopeful feature just now is the advanced position on this subject taken by such men as Drs. Schaff and Briggs. We have all along maintained that nothing permanent would be gained in this direction until the old theology was put into the alembic and crystallized into new forms under the power of some new and powerful principle. Such a principle is found in a new view of that fundamental doctrine of Christianity—the resurrection of the dead.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

From a Congregational minister.

Thanks for your October number which, in the press of engagements, I have only just now been able to peruse. The leading articles on Proof Texts, Judgment, and Universalism are timely and effective. You are clearing away rubbish and getting the field ready for a new survey. Plainly, your labors are not in vain in the Lord. They are telling, and will tell more and more, until a revision is secured, and theology formulated anew around Christ and the Resurrection. May our dear Lord uphold you in your goings. With warm Christian sympathy, Yours.

A Christian lady, who has shown her interest in this magazine in a very useful and practical way, writes to us from Newport.

In these strange times when the foundations seem to be giving away under one's feet, I hail your little monthly witness to God's truth with great satisfaction. As I hear doubting souls asking, "Do you believe in Christ?" and "Can you believe in a resurrection?" and this too, by children of the Church, I thank God for your response to these momentous questions, and your vindication—so clear and incontrovertible, of God's blessed truth. With great pleasure I enclose the second annual payment for which I am pledged. I sincerely hope the burden has been less heavy than last year, and that you find compensation for your labors in the assurances of comfort and help you have given to others.

Another lady writes:

I have not studied the subject deeply enough to say that I fully accept your views, but they seem to me to be full of a higher illumination, and calculated to promote higher views of God and truth, and the highest incentive to holiness and self-dedication. I read your defense before the West Jersey Presbytery with great delight and felt glad you were my friend. Your position seems to me invulnerable. I like it better than when the controversy with the Presbytery was pending.

From Worcester, Mass., a lady writes in behalf of herself and husband.

We received the November number of your valued magazine for which we return thanks, and bid you God speed in your future labors. We are fully persuaded God has called you to this ministry, and that this publication will be the instrument in His hand of opening the eyes of their understanding on this subject of many that are still in darkness. Enclosed find one dollar for the bound volume No. V.

We enjoy reading and discussing the subjects brought out in your magazine, and are thankful for the rest and comfort it brings to our minds to believe that in Christ all shall be made alive for other opportunities to glorify His name.

From a subscriber in Canada:

There are a few of us in this place who have come out of the Methodist Church. We found the creed too narrow to admit of that Larger Hope which St. Paul rejoiced in, and in which you

and many godly people rejoice—that there shall be a resurrection of the *just* and the *unjust*. Rev. W. Brookman, of Toronto, preached to us a series of very helpful sermons, and we are also much indebted to you for the light which your writings give on God's Holy Word. Our sincere prayer to our dear Heavenly Father is that He may continue to use you mightily in the furtherance of this blessed gospel whereof we are not ashamed.

A friend and Presbyterian Minister writes to us as follows upon Revision:

I am surprised that the newspaper articles seem to cleave such a narrow channel for this great pressure of thought. As though it could be confined between the banks of Calvinism on the one side and Arminianism on the other. I don't think our writers for the prints begin to take in the magnitude of the movement. There is no hint of the question, "What is election *for?*" It is treated as though it had no significance beyond the everlasting happiness of the elect.

Who cares at this day for the threshing of old straw between "old and new school" adherents, leaving out of sight completely those broad subjects that concern the world at large? Surely any attempt at Revision that leaves the eschatological department out of consideration will be an absurd failure. It will hardly do duty as a *sedative*. How much less a cure! But I do not know, after all, whether your studies are so much in advance of the age, as I feared they might be. A power greater than themselves will compel ministers and others to the examination of these neglected truths.

And when the tide is once turned in that direction, we shall not stop to ask leave of Calvin or Dr. Hodge, or any one else. How would it do—since Dr. Briggs has so demonstrated the kaleidoscopic accommodativeness (!!) of the Confession—in relation to the views of the framers—how would it do to petition that our terms of subscription be so modified as to recognize this fact, so that we might acknowledge, and the world know, that *our* subscription need not mean any more—or be any more binding than their's? "We accept the Confession as containing the best compromise of various and conflicting views that the able and pious framers were able to compound: and we promise to hold it, subject to interpretation *by* the Scripture, but not as limiting our understanding of the Word of God—or as an estoppel upon our preaching of any extra-Confessional—but Scriptural truth which we seem to discover in Holy Writ"!! How would that do, put into fewer words?

As far as I have read, I *still* think that Dr. Allen's "Con-

tinuity of Christian Thought" comes nearer than any of their disquisitions to indicating the true finality of the Catholic creed. It is a wonderfully satisfactory book.

Another, upon the same subject:

How grandly this Revision controversy is opening up. I am as one who stands when the long-expected storm in summer has at length come; the great black clouds are rolling up over the horizon, the mutterings of the distant thunder are heard, then follows the spatter of the first great drops of rain as the people in the streets scud away for shelter; the observer baring his head to the cooling breeze exclaims: "This is just what we need!" "This will do good!" I am glad to be of the number of those who recognize in all this not the arrest or the embarrassment, but the opening up and advance of the kingdom of God.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"I have been considering some texts in 1 Cor. xv. 'It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.' Now the question arises, Does this apply alike to the just and unjust, to saint and sinner? If so, will not those cast into the lake of fire or second death continue in endless torment?"

In interpreting 1 Cor. xv. 42–49, we are confronted with this dilemma. 1. Either every child of Adam raised will be thereby made incorruptible and of a heavenly manhood, or 2, we must assume that the apostle, who was writing only to saints, has here in mind only the resurrection of saints. The first cannot be true, for it contradicts the law of resurrection asserted in the chapter "To every seed his own body," and the uniform teaching of Scripture and of nature that it must proceed "according to deeds done." To suppose that the unjust are raised in purified and immortal bodies (only pure lives could be thus embodied) would require that they should have been carried through a previous moral discipline to fit them for such a state. We take it that such discipline cannot go on in the death-state, but only after recovery out of it.

If it be objected that, if verse 42 be limited to saints, verse 22

(In Christ shall all be made alive) must needs be also, we reply that from verses 20–26 St. Paul seems to discuss the resurrection of Christ in its broad human bearings, as affecting the race. In verses 42–54, his thought seems to be more occupied with the relation of this triumph to that of the saints; the pronoun *we* is prominent (verses 49, 51). But in verse 54 the thought of its bearing upon all mankind reappears. For the passage he quotes from Isaiah xxv. speaks of a feast of "fat things made by the Lord of hosts for all people" when "Death is swallowed up in victory." This agrees with the uniform Scripture teaching that the resurrection of the first-fruits opens up the channel of resurrection-blessing for all mankind. At the same time, the principle is not violated that these blessings reach them with strict discrimination as to fitness and desert.

In reference to the destructibility of any raised ones in the lake of fire, which is the second death, we fall back upon the principle that Scripture only speaks of two types of manhood, the earthy and the heavenly, whatever orders and degrees there may be under these two heads. The heavenly is of necessity pure and eternal; the earthy, of necessity temporal, disciplinary, struggling it may be toward perfection, but perishable. We cannot conceive therefore of an incorruptible body cast for endless torment into the lake of fire. That fire could not act upon what is incorruptible. It is this that inherits the kingdom of God (verses 50–54). No such monstrosity is conceived of in Scripture, or is possible in God's created system, as an impure being, immortally embodied. Every imperfect form of life tends to dissolution. Only such can be food for the eternal fire, the character of which we shall never understand unless we see it to be God's agent for the *destruction* of all that is unworthy to abide before Him. Let our correspondent then dismiss the thought that the wicked will be raised incorruptible. As well say that black will be made white. But we still are permitted to hope that, after being raised, they come again under the operation of God's eternal law of righteousness and of grace, and that by patient continuance in well doing, they may "seek for incorruption" (Rom. ii. 7, R. V.) and attain to eternal life.